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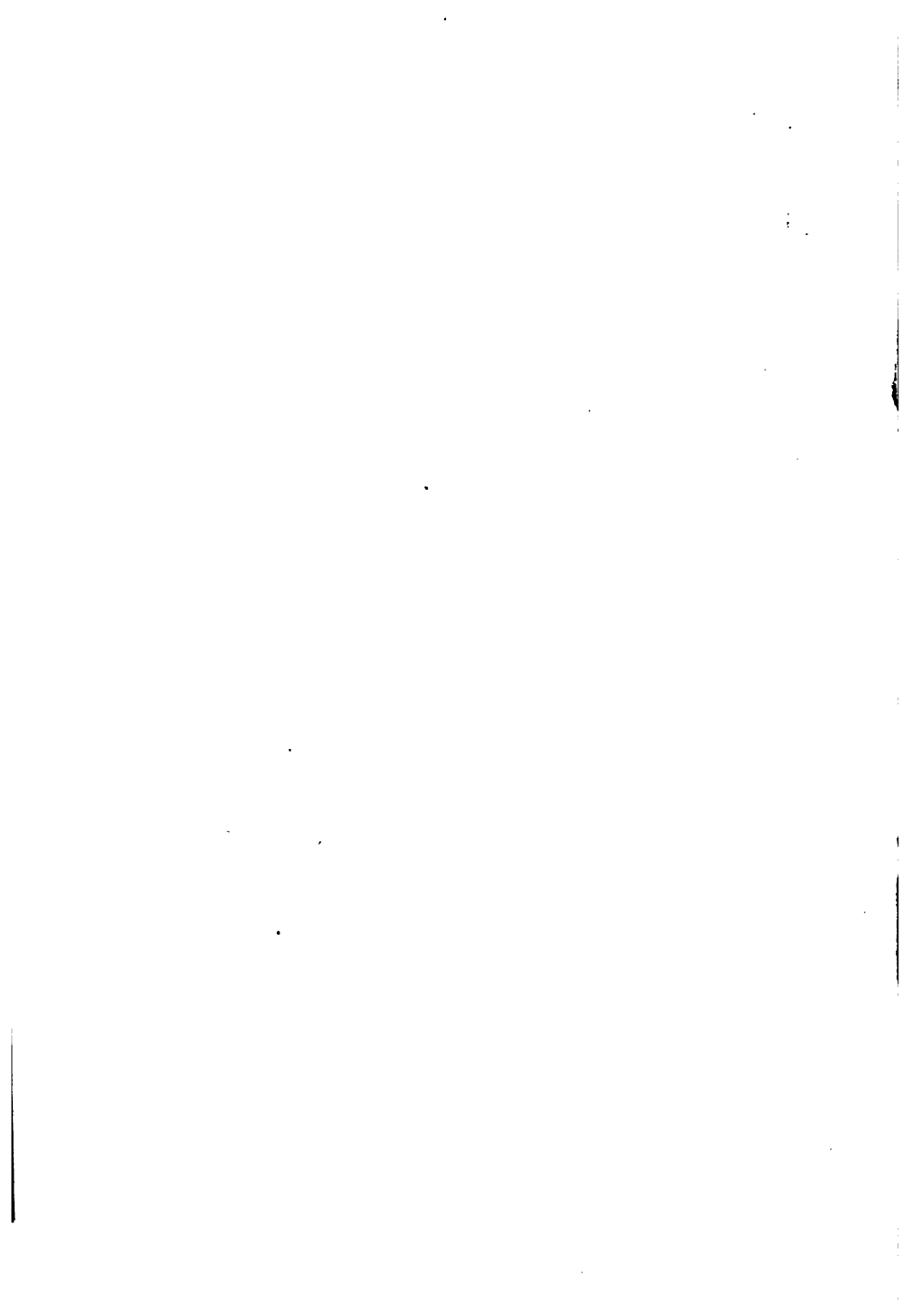
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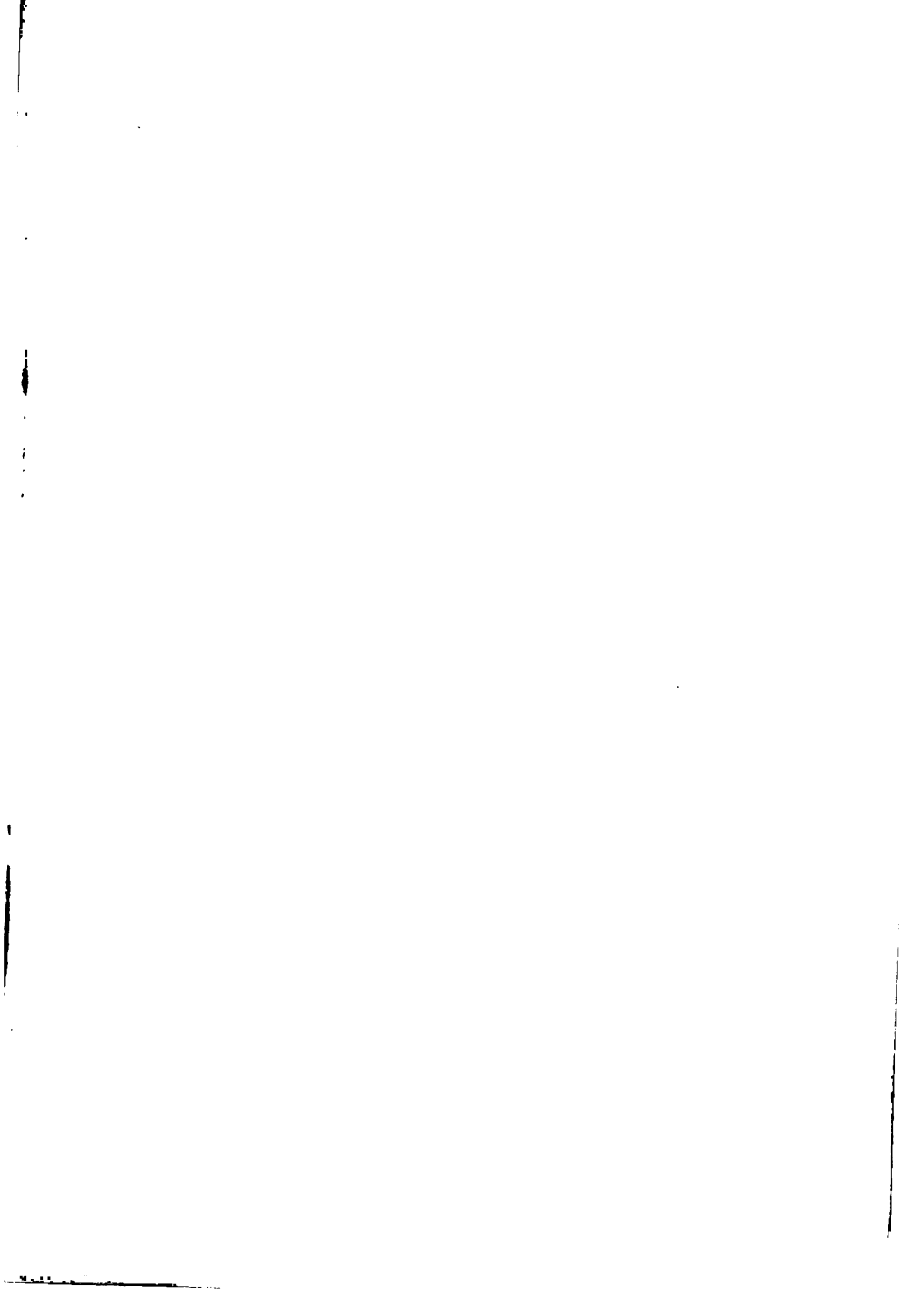
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THE HISTORIC CHRIST

THE HISTORIC CHRIST

BY

T. A. LACEY

Εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν,
ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν

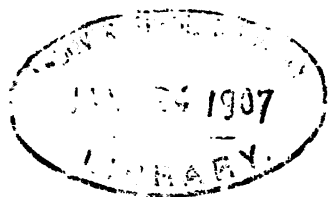
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PREFACE

Dogma is simply the maintenance of the historic Christ against imperfect definitions.—MANDELL CREIGHTON.

THE first five of these lectures were read in the Church of St. Philip and St. James at Oxford during the Lent of this year. The sixth was also to have been read, but its delivery was accidentally hindered. The last three were read at a much earlier date in the Church of St. Mark, Marylebone; but they followed a preliminary essay looking the same way as the other six, and they seem to cohere sufficiently with them to be gathered under a common title.

A short pamphlet on *Harnack and Loisy*, in which I first sketched the argument of these lectures, was honoured in the spring of last year with a remarkably hostile notice in the Oxford University pulpit. I should possibly have received in silence the castigation intended for myself, but Mr. Inge's sermon seemed to compass so complete a misapprehension of M. Loisy's position, that I was moved to call public attention to it. He represented the French critic—and me in agreement with him—as acknowledging "two Christs—the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels and the

Christ of faith"; as identifying this second Christ with "the Gnostic *Aeon Ecclesia* invested with Divine attributes"; as forbidding men to "look back" to Jesus of Nazareth; as making a "conscious, deliberate severance between Christ as an object of worship and Jesus of Nazareth"; as cutting faith "entirely loose from the world of physical phenomena." Against these imaginary enormities he earnestly protested. With some inconsistency he rebuked me for saying that Jesus of Nazareth was "dynamically the Christ of Chalcedon," adding "and, I suppose, the Christ of Trent." I should understand this implied reproach the better if I could find that Trent had made any addition to the Christology of Chalcedon. In subsequent correspondence, he complained of my remark that "a sound historic criticism will endeavour to identify Jesus of Nazareth in his habit as he lived, distinguishing this from all that he was to become." He took this to be an assertion of personal development, and replied: "There has been no change, no 'becoming,' in our Lord's Person since the Ascension." That is unimpeachable, if beside the mark as a criticism of Christological development. But Mr. Inge went on to say:—

"M. Loisy, no doubt, thinks otherwise. For him, the history of the Catholic Church has been a real development of the Incarnation, and the growth of Christological dogma has been a real becoming, for

none of the statements in the Creeds are true of the historical Jesus. Those who have read M. Loisy's other books know that his negative criticism is more uncompromising than that of Harnack; he believes Jesus to have been an amiable religious enthusiast, and no more" (*Church Times*, April 15th, 1904).

Mr. Inge wrote thus, although in a book with which he was well acquainted M. Loisy had said :—

"Le sentiment que Jésus avait de son union avec Dieu est au-dessus de toute définition. Il suffit de constater que l'expression qu'il en a donnée lui-même est, autant qu'on peut la saisir, équivalente en substance à la définition ecclésiastique" (*Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 137).

I felt constrained to ask Mr. Inge whether he made no distinction between "Jesus of Nazareth in his habit as he lived," and the Christ of history; was Jesus Christ for him precisely what he was for contemporaries at Nazareth? To this question I have heard no answer.

Mr. Inge has published a volume containing his sermon, with a preface in which he remarks that it had led to some correspondence, "Mr. Lacey maintaining that the quotations in the sermon did not fairly represent his position." That seems to me inadequate. I had, indeed, called attention to the inaccuracy of his quotations, but my chief complaint was that Mr. Inge's argument utterly and grotesquely

misrepresented the teaching of M. Loisy, to which in a measure I adhered.

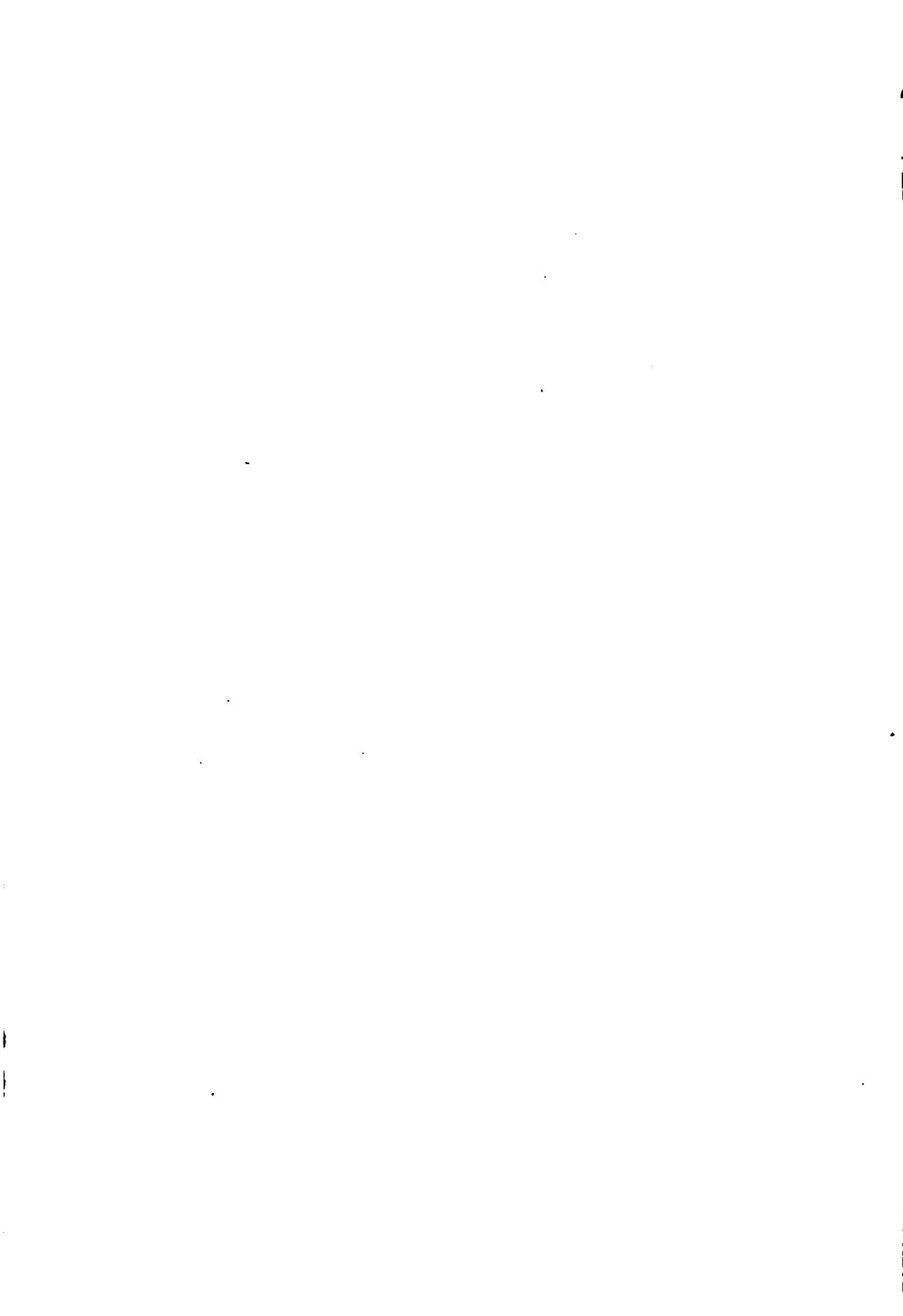
I shall admit that Mr. Inge's attack, and especially a remark in which he suggested that we upheld "a formal orthodoxy based on extreme scepticism," drew from me the lecture that holds the eighth place in this volume. That lecture throughout, and the ninth in part, go beyond the general subject proposed for consideration. But to confine oneself too rigidly to that subject is to court misunderstanding. My purpose is the exact opposite of that which Mr. Inge attributed to me when he condemned a sharp severance between the object of faith and the world of physical phenomena. But the concentration of faith and science on one object—one Person—cannot be safely effected without the most careful distinction of the two methods. Otherwise the Christian faith will either be reduced to an acquaintance, more or less intimate, with certain events that happened some centuries ago—a sort of historical knowledge tinged with emotion—or shrivel into an acceptance of formal propositions defiant of reality. It astonished me a little to find myself accused of wishing to base formal orthodoxy on scepticism—or indeed on anything else. Mr. Inge must have seen Mambrino's helmet flashing in the sun.

It would be an affectation to enumerate the books to which I owe all that may have any value in this

little volume ; but if it be a special duty to acknowledge obligations where one is least sympathetic, I should perhaps mention Professor Bacon's *Story of St. Paul*, which came into my hands while I was preparing the second lecture for delivery. I owe to the courtesy of the Master of Balliol—*patris gentilitatis nostræ*—the grant of a title, almost indispensable, which he has made his own by use in a transatlantic review.

T. A. LACEY.

May 20th, 1905.



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THE HISTORIC CHRIST

I

THE SOURCES

CHRISTIANITY is an historic religion, and that in a double sense ; it centres in a Person who can be identified in history, and its growth can be traced historically from the beginning. We must not exaggerate the historic element. The Christian religion does not consist in the knowledge of certain facts. Certain facts are essentially wrapped up in the truth of Christianity ; but you may be a good Christian while having only the most imperfect acquaintance with those facts, and, on the other hand, you may be scientifically acquainted with them and yet not be a Christian at all. Our religion is concerned with the moral and spiritual interpretation of those facts, and with the effect of such interpretation upon our lives and characters. It is not independent of the facts. It loses all vitality if they are denied ; it grows weak if they are even doubted ;

if they were disproved, it would pass altogether away, leaving only such results, good and evil, as have followed upon other long-cherished delusions. The defence of Christianity against particular attacks may therefore depend upon a careful study of the facts and their fresh establishment upon a sound historic basis. But in the ordinary course we take them for granted, as we accept most of the events of history, without question and without proof. And this acceptance passes imperceptibly into the category of religious belief.

For here is a distinction which we must get clear. By far the greater part of our knowledge of ordinary events is taken on trust. We believe what we are told; and our confidence is, on the whole, justified by experience. Very few of us have anything approximating to a scientific knowledge of the facts of the Norman Conquest. We accept the current account, not supposing it to be exact in every detail, but feeling confident that any serious errors would be corrected by competent historians. We do not suspend our studies in English history, or our action as subjects of the English Crown, until we have ascertained by personal investigation the spot where the Conqueror landed or the precise plea which he put forward in justification of his enterprise. We take for granted the broad outlines of the story. In exactly the same way we accept the few but

important facts which are wrapped up in the truth of Christianity. Of a wholly different kind is the belief which we distinguish as religious. It is concerned with moral and spiritual verities incapable of direct proof. It is so far in touch with history that you are probably moved to believe by the fact that certain persons have so believed in the past, and the study of human affairs may strengthen your belief by illustrating its moral consequences ; but to know that St. Paul believed a certain doctrine is not the same thing as believing it yourself, and to know that events have fallen out as a Christian would expect is not the same thing as to embrace the truth of Christianity. Religious belief or faith is an energy of the soul, at once intellectual and moral, which fastens upon a certain proposition and declares it unquestionably true. The motives inducing such belief are numerous, and defy analysis ; but the one ground for the belief is a conviction that God himself has in some way spoken and made known the truth.

Historical belief and religious belief are therefore distinct ; but they do not occupy separate compartments of our minds. They sometimes handle the same objects, and you pass imperceptibly from the one to the other activity. When faith is strong it lays hold of the mere facts of the gospel with a grasp very different from that with which we retain the

dates and events of the Conquest. They are held, not indeed more certainly, but more intimately. They are held almost as facts of our consciousness. When we recite our belief that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate we are not merely stating our cold acceptance of a certain event as having actually happened : the fact is so wrapped up in the spiritual interpretation which is the true object of religious belief that we hold it perforce with all the power of faith. And further, certain facts for which there is little historical evidence, or none at all that is in itself convincing, are held for true because of their implication with the objects of faith. You believe that some things happened as recorded, because you conceive it impossible that the Christian society in which the record was preserved can have gone so far astray as to accept a false tradition. You profess your belief that Jesus Christ was born of a pure Virgin, that he descended into hell, that he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God ; you make these statements as statements of fact, though historical evidence, properly so called, is in the nature of things inaccessible, and though some of them are expressed in language drawn from our ordinary experience which is wholly inadequate to the reality ; you receive these facts as facts because of their intimate connection with what you accept as the immediate object of faith.

In practice, therefore, it is impossible to separate these functions of faith and science; but they are logically distinguishable, and you can deal with the historic evidence in the abstract. You can weigh it, and can decide whether such and such things are historically established. The more you are convinced of their truth by the energy of faith, the greater will be your freedom of inquiry; for you are not pushed to conclusions by a subtle desire to establish a doubtful point. If you establish something, it is well: if you fail to establish it, you are untroubled. I do not say that we can dispense with all historic basis. Faith deals in the first place with the interpretation of facts, and those facts must be real, or faith is void. But the essential facts are few, and they are hardly so much as questioned. When the famous *graffito* of the Palatine was discovered, a venerable and pious priest was seen coming from the excavated chamber, his eyes streaming with grateful tears as he exclaimed: "That I should live to see this evidence brought to light against the falsehoods of those wicked men who deny that our Lord was crucified!" A critical friend asked him: "But who are these wicked men who deny that our Lord was crucified?"

For the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ is found in a period most historical. Here are no dim mists of antiquity. The time is one that is mentally

far nearer to us than many more recent. Nor were these things done in a corner. The action takes place on the open stage of the Roman Empire; in a province, it is true, but a province which drew many eyes; among a subject people, hated indeed of all others, but on that very account conspicuous. Christians might well date their Master's crucifixion by the name of the Roman Procurator who condemned him, for so they brought their memories into touch with the public records. Spurious Acts of Pilate were no doubt current, and were too confidently quoted by the uncritical; but genuine records were accessible; memories that might have been vague were open to test, and there were enemies enough to do the testing. Do not forget that when the gospel was preached in Rome it was preached in a city as well organized as any modern capital, to men who had both the means and the will to expose any falsehoods or delusions about the main facts on which it rested.

There is therefore a strong presumption in favour of the tradition that became permanent. Delusions have left their mark in history; impostors have had a vogue. But it would be remarkable indeed if a tradition like that of Christianity, being anything more or less than the truth, could establish itself in the face of bitterly hostile criticism. You have to reckon with the fact that the gospel was

spread in the first place along the lines of Jewish communications, and that the Jews were then, even more than now, a close-knit people, pushing systematically into all lands. The gospel issued from their own headquarters, and gathered disciples into a sect, formed within their own community; this gospel was a religious interpretation of certain facts which had occurred within their own memory; the majority of them rejected the interpretation, but they do not seem to have thrown doubt on the facts. They probably questioned details, even to the extent of cavilling, but in its main lines the story was unchallenged. Documentary evidence could not be sounder than such a tradition.

And let us remember that of direct documentary evidence we have very little. The earliest Christian writers, for the most part, take the facts for granted. They are concerned with the interpretation. The writings which are narrative in form, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are not merely narrative. They unquestionably aim at producing a religious impression. And they are undated. It seems impossible to fix the date of their production, but in no case can it be brought very near to the events. Now a narrative written or revised forty or fifty years after the happening of the events described is not, in the strict sense of the word, documentary evidence. We may have subsidiary

grounds for believing it to be accurate ; we may be convinced of its accuracy even in the minutest details ; but then we are justifying the narrative by other evidence, we are not using it as primary evidence. We may find it a most convenient and trustworthy compendium. It may be far more accurate, far more trustworthy, than any single contemporary document ; but it is not in the same sense evidence. Now there are two grounds on which we accept the narrative writings of the New Testament as trustworthy. The one is a religious ground ; it is fundamentally a conviction that God does not allow us to be deceived in these matters. The other is an historical ground, which is our present concern. We accept the narrative as true because the main facts narrated were allowed to pass practically without dispute, even by those whose interest it was to disprove them. We come back to the same point as before.

It is otherwise with the Epistles of St. Paul. Here we have documents, intensely human, dated pretty accurately, and dealing with contemporary events. Those events are not the primary facts of the gospel, but they stand in the closest relation to them. The first of these Epistles was written some twenty years after the Crucifixion, and they extend over about fourteen years. But they also contain allusions to personal experiences of the

writer, extending back for another fourteen years. Thus they cover the space of a generation, starting from within half a dozen years of the great events of the gospel. We find those events everywhere taken for granted ; they are not proved, as things doubtful or disputed ; only once does the writer think it necessary to mention the names of his authorities. The events had occurred within the memory of living persons, many of whom were eye-witnesses. The letters are at times even violently controversial. We have only one side of the controversy, but St. Paul is a disputant of the vehement kind, who constantly displays the strongest side of his adversary's case, and we can see pretty plainly what was going on. He had to interpret the spiritual significance of the events. His interpretation was contested by open assailants, his personal credentials were impugned by some of his own side. But nowhere is there a hint that he was misinformed, or that he misapprehended the facts.

But for St. Paul they were not bare facts, not mere events of a few years back. So regarded, they had little interest for him. He was concerned with their value, their spiritual meaning, their moral consequences. Here we observe something of first-rate importance. The Person of whom St. Paul wrote, whom many of his contemporaries had known with some degree of intimacy, was altogether extraordin-

ary. He was not merely one who had lived some years before and had left a fragrant memory. The memory of what happened before his death was comparatively unimportant; it was just his death that mattered—his death and what followed. He was still living—living not only as a memorable example, but in present power. That is the whole meaning of the gospel according to St. Paul. Now history has abundant examples of men, great in their lives, who have grown to still greater proportions in the memory of their followers, and about whom have gathered legends more and more exalted, perhaps fantastic. There have also been men whose importance and significance were imperfectly understood in their own time or in the time immediately following, but whose names are for after ages symbols of the great dynamics of history. In such cases some considerable time is needed for the growth of legend or for the development of understanding. Contrast our case. The written history of Christianity begins with the Epistles of St. Paul; and, from the first, Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord Christ.

When I speak of St. Paul's epistles in this connection, I wish to make no doubtful assumptions. I think we may safely disregard as midsummer madness the speculations of those few who think them all spurious; but there are grave critics who have doubts about the Pastoral Epistles and the Second

to the Thessalonians, perhaps also about the Epistle to the Ephesians. Put these aside, and the testimony of St. Paul remains unaffected. It is the earliest testimony; there is a bare possibility, if it amount to so much, that the Epistle of James is earlier; but if so, it will only be an elder contemporary. There is again the First Epistle of St. Peter; it is the occasion of some puzzling questions, but there seem to be no good reasons for doubting its authenticity. It stands in the closest relation to St. Paul's writings, an intimacy which is accounted for when we see that it was actually written by Silvanus, a known companion of St. Paul; but it is none the less St. Peter's own. Here is the same teaching. A recent critic, who cannot bring himself to doubt the genuineness of the letter, is amazed at the likeness. "It is hard," he says, "to imagine the first and nearest of the Twelve so much more affected, apparently, by the teaching of Paul than of Jesus. Surely Peter did not go about preaching the doctrines of Paulinism!"¹ It does seem very improbable. But the difficulty disappears if there were no Paulinism, if the teaching of Paul were in substance the same as that of Jesus. Paul himself certainly thought this was the case; Peter may very well have been of the same mind. When Paul withstood him to the face at Antioch their disagreement was not

¹ Bacon, *Introduction to the N.T.*, p. 153.

about the doctrine of the Christ; and the strife, in which they did not always take different sides, was composed some time before this letter can have been written.

In even closer connection with St. Paul's epistles must be read the narrative, written by one of his intimate companions, which is worked into the concluding chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Here are some speeches of St. Paul which are of first-rate importance. They may have been written over by the narrator in the usual fashion of historians, but we ought to be able to rely on the general accuracy of the report.

We have then a set of documents in which St. Paul is our chief authority. They cover a period of about one generation. That period begins, at the latest, about six years after the Crucifixion. The great events of the gospel are near enough to be vividly remembered, and eye-witnesses in abundance are living; but St. Paul himself had not seen those events. Is there any documentary evidence that goes farther back? There are the three Synoptic Gospels, with the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. What is the character of these books? In one respect they differ greatly from St. Paul's writings. They are anonymous. There may have been grounds for the choice of the names appended to them by tradition. In the case of St. Mark there

are good reasons for believing the attribution to be accurate: we can hardly say so much in the case of St. Luke, and the grounds alleged for assigning the first Gospel to St. Matthew the Apostle are quite inadequate. The books themselves are anonymous. And they are in the nature of compilations. From whatever sources derived, they are not themselves original contemporary documents. It is in the highest degree improbable that any one of them is older than even the latest of St. Paul's Epistles. As they stand, therefore, they afford only what is called secondary historical evidence. The value of their convergent testimony—that on account of which they were called *Synoptic*—is diminished by the fact, established now beyond all reasonable doubt, that they are drawn from common sources. But on the other hand there were at least three sources, and the preface to St. Luke suggests that many more were available. There will be more to say on this subject; it is sufficient for the moment to observe that the three evangelists, working in some measure independently on the sources, produce a portraiture which all the world can recognize as one. There are important differences of detail, owing to the different points of view taken, but the Personality is the same. No such impressive personality is to be found elsewhere in history. The reader is not easily found who comes to it fresh and unprejudiced;

but in the rare cases where this has been done the impression made seems to be even more marked than that which we receive who come to the narrative expecting to see the lineaments of the Son of God. I have heard of one who was robbed of sleep by the insistent pressure of this newly unveiled Personality upon his consciousness.

Such an impression might be made by an invention of one of the greatest poets or masters of fiction, though I do not know where you will find anything actually resembling it; or an historical person might be so dressed up by supremely artistic narrative as to produce an effect far greater than the reality would justify. But here we have three writers, one of whom seems to be thoroughly in-artistic, compiling from various sources the description of a Person who is thus impressive. The three narratives are almost equally effective. The portraits are not identical, but they blend harmoniously. I do not know how this can be accounted for on historical principles but by the supposition that the portraiture is true to fact. The Synoptic Gospels afford only secondary evidence, but there are good reasons for believing the record, at least in the main outlines, to be trustworthy.

There remains the group of writings known as Johannine. Who was their author? Where and when did he write? I ask one of the most debated

questions of New Testament criticism. You will not expect me to attempt an answer ; nor, for the use which I propose to make of these writings, will it be necessary. If indeed it could be shown that their author was one of the Twelve, none other than John the son of Zebedee, then his testimony, though delivered in extreme old age, would be of first-rate historical value. Yet, even so, it would be necessary to examine his method and purpose. Was it narrative or portraiture ? Was he concerned rather with facts or with their interpretation ? I shall be content to treat him as a Christian writer of an age about a generation later than the end of St. Paul's active life. But we must try to understand his method and his object in writing. If he draws a portrait, we must note its peculiarities. As a matter of fact, the portraiture of Jesus Christ with which we are familiar is derived at least as much from the author of the fourth Gospel as from the Synoptics : we habitually read his record into theirs, theirs into his. But for the purpose of history they must be kept distinct, and brought together only by conscious comparison.

We have then three groups of documentary evidence to consider—the Pauline, the Synoptic, the Johannine. Other fragments of testimony there are which ought not to be despised, and it is possible to trace the general trend of Christian tradition.

But on these we rely chiefly for a determination of the historical facts about Jesus Christ, the birth and the early growth of the religion which is called by his name. It may be that you believe with the confidence of perfect conviction certain things which cannot be so determined, that your hold of transcendental verities compels you to assume the reality of certain phenomena for which you have no direct evidence. But you can keep this attitude of mind distinct from the critical acceptance of facts historically investigated; and the distinction has a practical value, since the transcendental verities held so firmly are not merely in the air, but are themselves the interpretation of facts of history. These must be established, or we are lost in abstract mysticism. And that, if you will believe me, is not Christianity.

II

THE GOSPEL OF ST. PAUL

ST. PAUL is for us the first witness to the gospel of the Christ. We have his own writings of undoubted authenticity, and some others which are less assuredly attributed to him. We have also, embedded in the Acts of the Apostles, a narrative written by one of his immediate companions, in which some of his speeches are reported, probably with sufficient accuracy. At these we hardly need glance, unless it be for illustration; we shall find all that is necessary in his own writings.

But necessary for what? Our scope is narrow. We have only to make out what St. Paul asserts about Jesus Christ personally; there are great stretches of his teaching with which we shall not be concerned. And here is our chief difficulty in examining him as a witness. He is more concerned with doctrine than with history. His purpose in writing is not to make facts known, but to explain the spiritual significance of facts that are already familiar. But neither does he go about this business

in a set order. We can hardly doubt that he had a systematic doctrine—the gospel preached by him, as he calls it—in which facts and explanation were duly blended; but he seems to have composed no treatise; his Epistles are but occasional writings, and deal with subsidiary questions arising out of his doctrine. Therefore it is not surprising that we have to piece together scattered references in order to arrive at the gist of his testimony.

First, you will observe that St. Paul had probably never seen Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh. He is reported to have said in one of his speeches that he was educated at Jerusalem, in the school of Gamaliel, and this must have been about the time of the great events of the gospel, or a little earlier. But it is clear from his eager defence of his apostolate that he was challenged on the express ground that he had not a personal knowledge of the Master. The account of the election of Matthias shows what was at least a common conception of the apostolic character: there must be a personal knowledge of the main events of the gospel from the beginning. And St. Paul does not reply to the challenge by claiming such knowledge. He cries with insistence, "Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" But he almost certainly refers to his vision of the risen Lord: "Last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also." If he had been

an eye-witness, however hostile, of the events of the gospel, he would surely have mentioned the fact in reply to his assailants. If then he was at Jerusalem before those events, he must have been absent at the time, returning afterwards to take part in the persecution of the first disciples.

There is one passage which may seem to imply such an acquaintance with the events: "Even though we have known Christ after the flesh," he writes, "yet now we know him so no more." But if you look at the context, you will find the implication vanishing. There are two possible interpretations of the words, which are near enough akin to be practically one. They may mean, "Though we, as Jews, did in the past acknowledge a Messiah of an earthly type, yet now we acknowledge no such Messiah any more." They may mean, "Though we, the brethren, did once know Jesus in the flesh as Christ, yet now we know him so no more. He is changed for us by the fact of the resurrection, and is become the New Man, to whom we ourselves must be conformed." There is no reason to suppose that St. Paul is speaking of himself personally as having known or seen Jesus during his time on earth.

But in any case the importance of the passage lies in the emphatic declaration that a present knowledge of the Christ, as he now is, outweighs any other sort of knowledge. Here is the key to all St. Paul's

teaching about the Christ. Accordingly we find that in his writings he does not concern himself at all with the life of Jesus in Galilee or Judæa. Was the story of that life even known to him in detail? It is very doubtful. Some effort is required on our part to realize such ignorance. We are so familiar with the gospel narrative, we are so much accustomed to read the various books of the New Testament together, and to read them into each other, that we can hardly imagine St. Paul less intimately acquainted than ourselves with the parables, the miracles, the Sermon on the Mount. A Christianity in which these are not prominent features—what should we think of it? But the more we reflect on this, the harder it becomes to credit St. Paul with such knowledge as we possess. Picture to yourself a Christian teacher writing eight or nine long letters full of doctrine, of practical instruction, of spiritual advice. You will expect to find them full of allusions to the sayings and doings of the Lord Jesus. Turn to St. Paul's epistles, and you find nothing of the sort. He often speaks of miracles done by himself or his companions; he never recalls a miracle done by the Lord. He several times urges men to be imitators of himself: he once adds, "as I also am of Christ"; but he points to no details of practice. He claims on one occasion to have the mind of Christ; but when he bids the Philippians think the thoughts of Christ, we find this

explained by a reference, not to the discourses or habits of the Lord, but to the incarnation and the passion. It is even more remarkable that he rarely, if ever, quotes a saying of the Lord. Two quotations only are suggested. His advice to the Corinthians, "Eat whatsoever is set before you," is found all but identically, though in a wholly different connection, in St. Luke's Gospel. It is likely enough that St. Paul here borrowed for the purpose of his argument one of the current gnomic sayings of the Master. In writing to Timothy, if indeed that part of the Epistle be really his, he brings in as an express quotation the words, "The labourer is worthy of his hire," which we find in the same passage of St. Luke. These two instances stand alone. In one of his reported speeches there is another saying of the Lord quoted, which is not elsewhere preserved: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." We may be quite sure that many such sayings were current, and it is possible that St. Paul quotes some which we are unable to identify; but if so, he does not introduce them as the words of the Master. He more than once says that he has received direct instruction from the Lord; but he is then clearly referring to his own visions, and not to any record of former teaching.

We seem then to be shut up to one of two conclusions. Either St. Paul did not know the details of our Lord's life, or he thought them of

comparatively small importance. Comparatively, I say; but in comparison with what? In comparison with that upon which he is continually insisting, that which he calls his *gospel*. We must divest this word of associations which have gathered round it since St. Paul was writing. In particular we must put aside the colour which is given to it by its use in the title of the four canonical narratives and of others like them. That employment of the word is indeed most interesting. It seems to be derived from the first verse of St. Mark, where the *gospel* can hardly mean anything else but the whole narrative which follows. It was therefore current in this sense at an early date. But that is not St. Paul's use of the word. There was once in vogue an ingenious theory that a regular course of oral instruction about the Lord's life and teaching was given to new converts in the first age, that the men called in the New Testament writings evangelists or gospellers were the persons charged with this instruction, and that such fragmentary though systematic lessons formed the material out of which the canonical Gospels were eventually constructed. The theory is no longer maintained by anyone; but even if it had some foundation in fact it would still remain that St. Paul uses the word otherwise. How then does he use it?

We must start from the natural meaning of

the word. The Gospel is good news. This can hardly be anything else but the announcement of some fact. We may be sure that this primary significance of the word was never absent from St. Paul's mind. It acquired for him a more exalted and mystical meaning; he came to speak of the hope of the gospel, the mystery of the gospel, and much earlier he had spoken of the gospel of the glory of Christ. When he wrote to the Romans he made the future judgment of the world a part of his gospel. This looks rather to the spiritual interpretation of facts than to the facts themselves, and we have no reason for supposing that St. Paul sharply distinguished these two parts of his message. But behind the interpretation lie the facts, and the gospel, whatever else it be, is the declaration of those facts.

Here then is the historical purport of the word. And what were the facts thus made known as good news? St. Paul once has occasion to state them explicitly. "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." You have there the fact and the interpretation stated as inseparable, the death and the significance of the death. I hesitate about laying stress on the words *first of all*. If we may do so, then the death of Christ is for St. Paul the formal beginning of the gospel. In

any case that is the practical result of his teaching. And here is a great paradox. The death of the Master is the beginning of good news to the disciple—not his perfect life, not his incomparable counsel, not his inspiring promises and enthralling demands, but his death. The death is no good news, of course, apart from its interpretation; it would be nothing apart from its consequence, the resurrection. In these two events, the death and the resurrection of the Christ, St. Paul finds the sum total of the gospel:—

“I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”

If you look closely at the grammatical structure of this passage, you will see how carefully St. Paul wrote his statement. The facts for which there was definite witness are stated simply as facts—the

death, the burial, the appearances of the risen Christ. But the resurrection on the third day is stated with a change of tense, full of significance in the Greek language. The word is chosen to indicate a continuing state. The essential fact is not so much that Christ rose from the dead on the third day, as that he is risen, is now living. We should judge from this passage, if we had no other reason for the conclusion, that there was no eyewitness of the actual resurrection. It was known to have occurred only by its consequences, and the consequences on which St. Paul relies are the definite appearances of the risen Christ. He is careful to name the witnesses, to explain that they were not isolated—he was probably mindful of the objection that such an appearance to a single person might be an illusion of the senses—and to indicate that many of them were still living and accessible. You will observe also that he makes no distinction between the other witnesses and himself, except that the appearance was later in his case and perhaps more marvellous, in that he was a persecutor of the Church.

In this brief definite statement of the contents of his gospel, St. Paul puts forward only the fact of the resurrection, the renewed and continuing life of the Christ; he does not include its interpretation or significance. That is because he makes the statement

as a preamble to an elaborate argument about that significance. Elsewhere he will put the fact and the interpretation together in a pregnant phrase, summing up the gospel of the death and the resurrection of Christ, "who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification."

I am concerned directly with St. Paul's witness to the historic facts. But that witness cannot be severed entirely from his teaching about their significance. It was because of their significance that he reckoned the facts important, and insisted on the evidence. If he neglects other facts, it is because of their comparative insignificance. And what does he say about the life and character of him who thus died? Surely the personality is important. I find in one of St. Paul's epistles an allusion to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. It is enough to show that a personal presentment of the Master—a portrait, so to say—was familiar both to the writer and to those whom he was addressing. But the allusion stands alone. I find one reference to the human origin of the Master. He was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. This again was evidently a matter of common knowledge, or perhaps we should say, of commonly accepted belief. The reference stands alone, and there is nothing to show that St. Paul attached any great value to the circumstance. Does he therefore neglect the personality of Jesus

Christ as an unimportant factor? If you estimate that personality by the sayings and doings of two or three active years or of a thirty years' training, he does pass it by. We have, it is true, only some scattered writings of his ; we do not know what he may have said or written at other times ; but I am regarding him as an historical witness, and so am concerned only with what we actually have from his mouth. Moreover he happens in these writings to cover the ground pretty completely, and if he had thought this aspect of the personality of his Master very important, he could hardly have failed to treat it with some fulness.

Now there are few things that we desire more from an historical witness than a presentment of personality. The historic Christ is unquestionably one of the great dynamic personalities of the world. Is St. Paul therefore an unsatisfactory witness? If he has nothing to tell us but that a shadowy indeterminate person died and rose from the dead, he will not help us much. But that is not the nature of his witness. If he neglects to present Jesus of Nazareth in his habit as he lived among men, it is not because he underrates the importance of his Master's personality ; it is because he sees that personality in another and a more important aspect. He who died and rose again was the Son of God. If he was born of the seed of David according

to the flesh, he was determined to be the Son of God by the resurrection. And he was thus determined or defined *in power*; he is dynamically this. Before writing thus to the Romans, St. Paul had written to the Galatians that "God sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts," and under the same title had expressed the dynamic spirituality of Jesus yet more forcibly because in a more vivid relation of person to person: "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me." In one of his later writings he puts the same thought into picturesque words, saying that God has "translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The thought gains fuller and richer expression in the later epistles, but it is found in the very earliest. In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, without special reference to this dynamic value of Sonship, he had already connected the title with the resurrection, saying that we are to serve God and to wait for his Son from the heaven, whom he raised from the dead.

You see then what, according to the mind of St. Paul, is the dynamic personality of the risen Christ. It is the personality of the Son of God. And what does this mean? Is it that Jesus, being raised from the dead, is clothed upon with a new dignity and power, raised to the highest degree of

that divine sonship which belongs in a measure to all men? Nothing could be further from St. Paul's thought. If that were the meaning, then surely the previous career of him who died and rose again would be of paramount importance. How did he attain to this supreme development? St. Paul has no answer, because for him there was no such question. To his mind the Son was with God from the beginning, and came into the world expressly to suffer and to triumph. He writes of God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin. It is not only the risen Lord, it is the Crucified Messiah, the scandal of the Jews and the derision of the Greeks, whom he identifies with the divine Power and Wisdom. That means much in the mouth of one to whom the Sapiential books of the Old Testament were familiar.

St. Paul had not therefore to ask what Jesus of Nazareth had done to become worthy of this new dignity. But there comes a question that presses for an answer. To those who heard his message he presented a Man, one who had lived within recent memory, whose life and conduct were open to examination—he presented this Man as the Master of their spiritual life. What was the evaluation of this Man? What was his moral worth? What were his claims on the disciple? If we are asked that question, we point to his recorded sayings and

doings; we urge men, if they hesitate to acknowledge him as their God, to allow at least the supreme worth of his manhood. We think that we may lead them on from this to a fuller apprehension. But St. Paul does not seem to have followed any such method. Make every allowance that you will for his circumstances, for the current knowledge of the life of Jesus on which he might rely, for all that may have been said privately or publicly on the subject, you have still to reckon with the fact that nowhere in his extant writings does he point to the teaching and the conversation of Jesus Christ as the ground of confidence in him, as master or exemplar. And we have not stumbled here on some unfilled blank in St. Paul's teaching. He speaks abundantly of the ground of confidence, but it is a wholly different ground. It is the death of Christ, and not his life, which appeals to the disciple. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." There is a passionate devotion to him "who loved me and gave himself up for me." But the relation is more than personal. The moral value of the Christ is found in his death, according to St. Paul, because that death was the revelation of divine Love. "God com-

mendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But not only as Master does he thus claim our allegiance. He is our exemplar on precisely the same ground. Here in still more striking fashion we see what is St. Paul's evaluation of the Christ. The Son, issuing from the depths of the divine love, and not any human person, however perfect, is the actual pattern for our imitation. It is God's purpose that we be conformed to the image of his Son. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, for a double purpose : the purpose of redemption, that men might receive the adoption of sons, and the purpose of practical reconciliation, that they might have the spirit of sonship in their hearts. For St. Paul, the example of Jesus Christ has moral value only as being the example of the Son of God, as bringing the divine activity into intimate touch with human things. The intricate relation is finally expressed in the tremendous words : "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who being originally in the form of God counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him

the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

You may say, as one has said from whom I do not willingly differ, that St. Paul here conceives two Christs—the one eternal, an object of faith; the other appearing in time, an object of history. The distinction is accurate, but you must not press it too far. One personality furnishes the double object. The titles are interchangeable. It is the eternal Son who was humbled to the cross: it is Jesus of Nazareth in whose name every knee must bow. The distinction lies in our capacity; it is the distinction between that which we conceive by the transcendent faculty of faith, and that which we know by evidence. But St. Paul's meaning is that the eternal and invisible came into the temporal order, and so became an object of history.

St. Paul is our chief witness for the historic facts. He cannot, of course, supply historical evidence for what lies outside the temporal order. There can be no such thing. But it is of historical importance to know how the historic person who died and rose again was conceived by his contemporaries. If you have ever imagined a young rabbi or a Galilean artisan who by his exquisite goodness and purity, his

realization of the brotherhood of man, his consciousness of the fatherhood of God, made so deep an impression upon his friends that after his unjust condemnation and death they thought of him as living with divine power and pouring a divine radiance into their own lives—if you add to this that he did actually rise from the grave by the power of God and appeared to these friends, assuring them of his endless life—if you suppose that you have thus rendered a reasonable historical account of the gospel, you have to reckon with the fact that St. Paul himself, our chief witness for the events, knows no such legend. For him it was no Jewish rabbi or Galilean peasant who died and rose again: it was the Son of God, who humbled himself to be made in the likeness of men, expressly that he might die and triumph.

III

THE BACKGROUND OF ST. PAUL'S GOSPEL

ST. PAUL is a great and solitary figure. There are some who hold that he was never properly understood until he found an interpreter in St. Augustine. The extent of his influence in the formation of Christianity is not questioned; it is perhaps even exaggerated. We know so much more about him than about any of his fellow-workers that we may possibly undervalue these. He was the chief of the very few among the promulgators of the gospel who could express it for European minds; but this was not the only promulgation needed. He is unapproachable as a witness of the gospel to us; but he did not stand thus alone in the days when eye-witnesses were still numerous; indeed he was hardly their equal, and his competence was challenged. His isolation, if not his eminence, is rather in literature than in history.

In a word St. Paul, like every other great man, had an environment. Our knowledge of the man himself

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is imperfect, in proportion as we lack the knowledge of his surroundings. Can we reconstruct the scene? What is important for our purpose is to know whether his presentment of the gospel was a personal idiosyncrasy or the general tradition of his day. With other aspects of his teaching we are not concerned, nor with the questions of the social order which vexed his soul. What he took from the Stoic schools of Tarsus and worked into the web of Christian thought, what he learnt of his masters at Jerusalem and carried over into Christian theology—these things lie properly beside our question. It is true that he brings all his thoughts too closely into connection with his gospel of the Cross to allow an easy disentanglement of what we seek. Still the main question is simple: St. Paul's witness to the personality of Jesus Christ the Son of God, his death and his resurrection—was this the general witness of Christians?

We have to reconstruct the background of St. Paul's gospel. And first, there is a detail which needs no seeking, for it is one of the prominent characteristics of the world as it then was: the Jewish nation, scattered through the towns of Europe and Asia, always in touch with the headquarters of race and religion at Jerusalem, knit together by an efficient social organization, jealously regarded by most men with a contempt bordering on fear, recognized by many as possessed of a hope and doctrine unique

and worthy to be embraced. The nation is alive with the expectation of the Messiah, an expectation engendering tumult and fanaticism, and working slowly but surely to the great revolt against the Roman dominion which broke out during the last days of St. Paul. A second detail we may add by sure conjecture: a certain knowledge, spreading along the lines of Jewish communication, of the man Jesus of Nazareth, inexact, no doubt, and prejudiced, but reinforced from time to time by the memories of those who had seen and heard the occurrences of his life.

Other details remain to be ascertained. We should have less difficulty here if we could take the Acts of the Apostles for a first-rate historical authority. But that is impossible. In saying this one does not necessarily impugn the accuracy of the narrative. The writer may be all that his recent vindicators assert him to have been, an accurate painstaking historian with access to good materials, and yet not be the kind of authority that we require. To illustrate this by an example, let me remind you that a history of the Crimean War written by the most competent hand at the present time would not be an authority in the sense that a very inferior narrative might be if written fifty years ago by an eyewitness. This book, the Acts of the Apostles, regarded as an historical document, labours under

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the serious disadvantage of anonymity; it was written we know not when, but certainly many years after the events described; and it was evidently written for the purpose of edification. It is none the worse on that account; the purpose is as legitimate as any other; but the fact diminishes the value of the book for historical purposes. The writer's aim was not to give a complete account of all that happened, but to describe things that were edifying. His object was to build up his readers in the faith, to establish them in the practice of the Christian religion. He states this object in the preface to his first book, the Gospel: "That thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." The very last thing that he would have in mind was to furnish us with material for our historical inquiry.

The Travel-document, the diary of a companion of St. Paul which the author of the Acts incorporated into his book, stands on a very different footing. It is an authority at first hand. The speeches also reported in this section of the book have an almost equal value. But after all we must again depend chiefly upon St. Paul's own writings. Priceless fragments of autobiography are contained in them; they are full of references to current controversy; they extend over a large part of his career; they are occasional writings, not formal treatises, and there-

fore reveal the more naturally and the more inevitably the facts that we require.

Still the mass of material is not large. Its paucity left room for a theory, current fifty years ago, which represented historical Christianity as the result of a terrific conflict between St. Paul and the elder apostles, a conflict which was not ended until after the death of the protagonists, and in which neither side secured a complete victory. The Christian religion was, in short, a compromise. The theory has not stood the test of prolonged criticism. It has done good service in compelling criticism; in disappearing from the field it has left St. Paul and his times more clearly understood.

St. Paul did indeed live in great stress of controversy. The struggle is passed over lightly in the Acts of the Apostles. It was ended when the book was written, and there was no need to stir its ashes. The author speaks freely of the constant antagonism of Jews who were not disciples; he says little or nothing of contention with Jews who were disciples. The writer of the Travel-document twice lets in a little light, where he reports St. Paul speaking of the grievous wolves that would find their way into the flock at Ephesus after his departure, and where he describes the nervousness of James and the elders at Jerusalem when welcoming Paul: "Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the

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Jews of them which have believed, and they are all zealous for the law: and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." It was necessary for him to do something to conciliate, or at least to silence these gain-sayers, and he took the step suggested, but apparently in vain.

In St. Paul's own letters there are clearer indications of strife, and the strife is more serious. He tells the Galatians how grave an issue arose between himself and Peter at Antioch, and mentions the fact that certain emissaries from James made the mischief, their influence being so great that even Barnabas sided with them. He seems to have felt this bitterly. At the same time he tells how James himself with Peter and John had not long before given him the right hand of fellowship at Jerusalem, in spite of the opposition of false brethren privily brought in. There was therefore vacillation on the part of the elder apostles. The cause may have lain in Paul's own practice, if he conformed to the requirements of the law when at Jerusalem, but refused to do so at Antioch. For this was the matter at issue.

The sharp contention may have been brief, but the state of things which gave rise to it was permanent. St. Paul was jealously watched by men who resented

his claim to the apostolate, and who were hostile to his methods. It is not surprising. From the first he was terribly independent. His autobiographical note to the Galatians shows this. He insisted that he was an apostle, not from men, neither through man. He did not derive his mission in any way or in any degree from those who were apostles before him. Neither did he derive his gospel from man, nor was he taught it, but it came to him by revelation of Jesus Christ, and by Jesus Christ he was called directly to the apostolate. It is unnecessary for us to stop and ask what this means : we are concerned only with the fact that he made the claim. It was evidently an unusual claim, probably unique. Barnabas, for example, would be an apostle from men, or through man. Moreover when St. Paul received his call, which was expressly to preach the gospel among the Gentiles, "I conferred not," he says, "with flesh and blood ; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me : but I went away into Arabia ; and again I returned to Damascus." He began at once to act on his mission. Then after three years he went to Jerusalem. He went expressly to make Peter's acquaintance, or to report his doings to Peter, or to make inquiries of Peter. The word *ιστορησαι* will bear any one of these three meanings. Thus he came into contact with the elder apostles, seeing however only Peter and James. He stayed

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with them fifteen days. Then he returned to his labours in Syria and Cilicia, and so continued in comparative isolation, though joined eventually by Barnabas, for fourteen years. He then once more visited Jerusalem and was well received by James, Peter, and John. Soon after this begins the series of the Epistles.

Two important results issue from this narrative. In the first place it helps to account for St. Paul's neglect of the Galilean life and teaching of his Master. He had small opportunity for learning anything about this. He was probably familiar, already before his conversion, with the closing scenes at Jerusalem; he must have heard many times what was currently reported about the resurrection, and the testimony of those whom he persecuted. To this knowledge was added his own vision of the risen Lord, and all that he received, as he says, by revelation. His gospel is complete.

In the second place the narrative shows how jealously the teaching of St. Paul would be scrutinized. If this isolated pretender to the apostolate had proclaimed a gospel differing by a hair's breadth from that of the elder apostles, he would have been at once denounced. Is there any trace of such denunciation? You will say perhaps that St. Paul himself, at all events, fiercely denounced any who should preach another gospel than his own, implying

that such other gospels there were. True : but the nature of the discrepancy is known. It lay in the practical consequences, the moral and ceremonial conclusions to be drawn from the gospel. These were of immense importance ; for after all, what is the gospel without its moral and religious consequences ? To falsify these was to empty the good news of all meaning. The gospel meant for St. Paul that the observance of the Mosaic Law was inevitably to pass away, and that men of all races were to be absolutely equal in the new religious order. This the Judaizers denied ; and denying this, they taught to all intents and purposes another gospel. But there is nothing to suggest that he and they differed about the facts from which they drew such diverse conclusions. Had they so differed the difference must have been prominent in controversy and could not have failed to leave its mark on the controversial epistles. The measure of their discord is the measure also of their agreement about the elementary facts of the gospel.

You may be sure that St. Paul's opponents made the most of their case against him. They evidently commented on the fact that he had not been one of the familiar companions of the Lord Jesus. They treated him as an interloper, and his description of " false brethren privily brought in " looks very much like a phrase retorted on those who had used it

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against himself. But with all this sharpness there is no suggestion that anyone accused him of misrepresenting the facts, or of deranging their relative importance. There is no hint that anyone complained, for example, of his neglect of the Galilean life of Jesus, or disabled his gospel in consequence. And this is the more remarkable, since the neglect might be represented as strictly in keeping with his strenuous insistence on those results of the gospel which were in dispute. The more he thought of Jesus Christ as the new Adam, the Lord of a redeemed humanity wide as the world, the less he would be interested in the local and Jewish aspects of the gospel. His neglect may have been partly due to this cause. But then what a handle he was giving to his adversaries! If they did not use this advantage against him, I cannot explain their forbearance except on the supposition that in this regard his gospel did not differ as much as you might expect from that of the elder apostles. The gospel of St. Paul, the gospel of the cross and of the resurrection, would seem to have been the gospel also of his contemporaries.

Let us now turn to another part of the background. You will find from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that St. Paul was accused of having a *veiled* gospel. He replies with a rather elaborate argument about the spiritual obscurity

of the Old Testament, saying that his gospel is veiled for those who are blinded by the god of this world. If you will turn back to the First Epistle, you will see the meaning of this charge more clearly. He there tells the Corinthians that he speaks wisdom among the perfect; he speaks God's wisdom in a mystery. That is the language of the Greek mysteries, in which secret doctrines were communicated to the initiated. In his more public teaching, he tells them, he confined himself to the proclamation of Jesus Christ and him crucified. What then were his secrets? You will observe that in this connection he was dealing with troubles that arose between himself and Apollos, or at all events between those who constituted themselves their followers. Now Apollos was an Alexandrian. He would be trained in the school of Philo. He would be familiar with that doctrine of the *Word*, which Philo grafted upon the Sapiential books and applied to the interpretation of the other scriptures, and which provided the terms at least of a later Christian theology. It is clear that a party at Corinth preferred this philosophic style, contrasting it with Paul's cruder presentment of the gospel. He answers them. There was a Christian philosophy in reserve for minds that were full grown, trained in spiritual discernment; but even the simplest presentment of the Christ contained that philosophy by

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implication: the crucified Christ, the scandal of the Jews and the derision of the Greeks, was himself the eternal Word, the Wisdom of God.

You derogate nothing from the dignity of St. Paul or from the value of his witness if you suppose that intercourse with Apollos brought these ideas into clearer shape in his mind. He can hardly have been ignorant of Philo's speculations, but his education at Tarsus and at Jerusalem would probably throw him into opposition to them. His own mind seems to have been formed after a strange mixture of Stoicism and Rabbinism. It is not to be supposed that he picked up fundamental ideas from Apollos. His whole conception of his gospel makes such a thought impossible: he was probably impervious to new ideas. He plainly hints to the Corinthians that his selection of the simpler presentment of the gospel was deliberately made in view of their needs. "When I came unto you I came not with imposing style of word or of wisdom"—there is an incommunicable play of language—"declaring to you the mystery of God. For I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Afterwards came Apollos, whose teaching St. Paul identifies with his own, though so differently expressed: "I planted; Apollos watered." The simpler presentment did not imply the absence of profounder thought in the background. There was room, now for one

expression of the gospel, now for the other. Some few months later, writing to the Romans, he made an obscure but unmistakable allusion to the doctrine of the Word. In a mystical interpretation of a certain passage from the Law he identifies the Word of God with the Person of the Christ. "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down :) or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." His mind must have been saturated with the idea before he could use it so casually, and he must also have counted on some preparation for it in the minds of those to whom he was writing.¹

And indeed for a large part of the Jewish race, and still more perhaps for others who were affected by Jewish thought, the recognition of Jesus as the Christ necessarily involved this recognition of him personally as the Divine Wisdom, the Word. Some years later we find St. Paul writing to the Colossians in the full flood of this theology. He now describes the Lord Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God, the Son of his love, the first-born of all

¹ See note A.

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creation, in whom and through whom and unto whom all things are made. Theology is not the gospel; but Christian theology is nothing if it be not a presentment of the gospel in terms of philosophy. In the philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews St. Paul found a fitting vehicle for his gospel.

We can thus place the gospel of St. Paul in its proper historical setting. There are many other ascertainable details which I neglect, these being sufficient. The gospel itself is simple: it is the record of Jesus, crucified and declared by his resurrection to be the Christ, the Son of God. We see this gospel projected on two planes.

There is on the one hand the Palestinian Judaism, ramifying from its centre at Jerusalem through all the cities of the world, partly accepting, partly rejecting the gospel. Its adherents are either fiercely hostile to St. Paul or at least uneasy about his practical inferences from the gospel. But the gospel itself appears to be, for all who receive it, one and uniform. There must have been tender and affectionate memories of the humanity of Jesus, but there is no evidence that anyone put these forward as the essence of the gospel. There is no evidence of any presentment of Jesus as a person of human origin, illuminated by a singular consciousness of the Fatherhood of God, sanctified by character or by sufferings, growing in the imagination of his followers to a

divine stature. No such person is known : he who died and rose was the Christ, the Son of God, fulfilling in strange and unwelcome fashion the nation's Messianic hopes.

There is on the other hand the Alexandrian Judaism, this also spreading wherever Greek culture exists, and this also partly accepting, partly rejecting the gospel. For few, if any, of its adherents were there personal reminiscences, but for them also the gospel was matter of fact. They laid hold of the one great dominant fact of the resurrection, and in that historic personage who rose from the dead they recognized the reality of that which they had figured to themselves, the personal Wisdom or Word of God. The facts were established ; they demanded interpretation, and in the first announcement of the gospel were laid the foundations of Christian theology.

IV

THE SYNOPTIC TRADITION

WE have considered the evidence of St. Paul, our earliest witness for the historic personality of Jesus Christ. We have found in his writings, and in what we can trace of his surroundings, few vestiges of any interest expressed or felt in the outward circumstances of the Man of Nazareth. There is no copious quotation of the Master's sayings; there is no mention of his miracles; there is only the slightest allusion to his habits. Attention is concentrated upon his death and resurrection: he issued personally from the eternal invisible order, and entered the sphere of human action expressly that he might die. That is, so far as we can trace it, the original gospel.

At the same time it cannot be doubted that memories of the sayings and doings of the Master were cherished among the disciples. It is possible that St. Paul's comparative ignorance on this score sharpened the reproaches levelled against him as a false or inferior apostle. Stories would unquestion-

ably be current, and human experience is strangely at fault if they did not often put on a fantastic character. Sayings of the Master would inevitably pass from mouth to mouth. Parables, with their short and pithy structure, would be more especially adapted to oral repetition. Some longer discourses may have been recalled and written down at an early date, unless indeed this were prevented by the strong feeling which seems to have prevailed among the Jews at that time against seeming to put the instruction of a rabbi on the level of scripture. But on the other hand the expectation of a rapidly approaching end of all things may have made such care for posterity seem needless. Nothing, however, could prevent the foundation of a large floating mass of tradition. It is significant that even so late as the third decade of the second century Papias of Hierapolis—a small-minded man, according to Eusebius, with a leaning to the mythical—preferred what he could pick up from oral tradition to the information that might be derived from books.

There is evidence, by no means first-rate but worthy of attention, that St. Matthew the Apostle made a written collection of the Lord's oracular utterances. The very date is indicated. The work was done, says Irenæus, while the Apostles Peter and Paul were together at Rome. This statement was made when the four canonical Gospels had long been received,

and is meant to apply to the first of them; but it may be a genuine tradition of an older work. The silence of St. Paul about the words of the Master forbids the supposition that any such collection was generally current in his time. The date, coinciding with the dispersal of the Church at Jerusalem before the great siege, is at least probable. It might well seem advisable in those dark days to write out the great sayings of the Lord before the memory of them perished. They are said by Papias to have been preserved in Hebrew: that is to say, in the vernacular of Palestine; and the book as a whole was apparently never translated into Greek.¹

The beginnings of a written tradition coincide, then, roughly with the death of St. Paul. We have no reason to suppose this first collection to have contained anything but pregnant utterances like those of the Sermon on the Mount, possibly with a brief indication of the occasions when they were delivered. So far there is no trace of a regular narrative. But this soon followed. Once more we have a report from the unsatisfactory Papias of what he had heard from his elders, and it is not improbably true. "Mark," he says, "having served Peter as interpreter, wrote carefully though not in order all that he remembered of the sayings and doings of the Christ. He was not a hearer of the Lord nor a follower; but was

¹ Iren., *Har.*, iii. 1. Papias in Euseb., iii. 39.

afterwards a follower, as I say, of Peter, who arranged his instructions with reference to topics, not as if he were planning a regular collection of the Lord's words; and so Mark did not blunder in writing various things after this fashion as he called them to mind; for his one preoccupation was neither to omit nor to falsify anything that he had heard."¹

I think we may find it possible to suggest another preoccupation. The rest of the statement presents no difficulties; it certainly refers to the Gospel according to St. Mark as we have it, and it is not improbably true. In that case the book, though anonymous, is traced to a known author. The way in which his relation to St. Peter is mentioned suggests that he wrote after the Apostle's death. His narrative would thus contain reminiscences of Peter's reminiscences. The Gospel as we have it answers exactly to the description. There are scattered memories of the Lord's sayings and doings, with no attempt at a connected story until the beginning of the Passion is reached. Then we have full detail. Nor can there be much doubt that the story of the Resurrection was told, or intended to be told, in perhaps equal detail. It begins with the visit of the women to the empty grave, where they receive a significant message to the apostles, and to Peter himself in particular. We naturally expect to find

¹ *Ibid.*

the message followed up. But the book breaks off in the middle of a sentence. Long afterwards a conclusion was added, which we still retain. The original book was either left unfinished by the author, or mutilated by the loss of the concluding columns in the copy from which all subsequent copies were derived.

This scheme of the book is exactly what the study of St. Paul's gospel has led us to expect. The Death is prominent; the circumstances are detailed with care. The Resurrection was probably no less prominent in the writer's execution or intention. The message from the grave points to those appearances of the risen Lord which are mentioned by St. Paul. This was the substance of the gospel. The author is probably that Mark who was a frequent companion of St. Paul as well as of St. Peter, and we have seen that there is no reason for supposing the gospel of the one apostle to have differed in this respect from that of the other. But to this fundamental gospel St. Mark prefixes some chapters on the sayings and doings of the Lord.

Of these records the most striking characteristic is perhaps that which Papias noticed—their disconnectedness. There is no attempt at a regular biography, or even at a regular narration of the occurrences of some months. The duration of the events reported is nowhere suggested. There are

periods of uncertain length about which nothing is said. We are told, for example, that Jesus sent the twelve apostles on a mission, two by two, with a charge implying a rather long absence; we hear of their return, but nothing is told of what happened in the interval, either to them or to their Master.

Another characteristic, revealing itself more and more to a close reader, is the vividness of the descriptions. I will mention one instance. In the story of the feeding of the five thousand, not only is the green grass mentioned, a detail which has been seized upon as evidence of the time of year, but a still more picturesque touch, lost in all translations that I know, is found in the original. The companies of a hundred arranged on the green turf are compared with the flower-borders of a garden. The turn of the expression used is Aramaic, and I do not know where you will find in any literature a more vivid touch of the eyewitness. One seems to hear the words fall from the mouth of the Apostle describing the scene.

It is a further characteristic that these vivid recollections of the eyewitness comprise a large number of miracles, and imply many more. That is a circumstance the significance of which is in our day comparatively small. Miracles do not mean much for us, and the doubts and difficulties which their narration once raised are also coming to be of little

consequence. More important and more interesting is the presentment of personality. What have we of this kind in St. Mark?

I have tried to bring before you St. Paul's presentment of the personality of Jesus Christ—the eternal Son of God coming into the temporal order, born of a woman, expressly that he might die. Of this presentment there are some rare echoes in St. Mark. There is twice recorded the hearing of a mysterious voice from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son." This particular term is found in St. Paul's later epistles, and it seems to have been usual in apocalyptic writings. We are three times told of demons or demoniacs making frantic protestations: "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God"; and more explicitly, "What have I do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God!" Two recorded sayings of the Lord himself more doubtfully resemble the language of St. Paul: "To this end came I forth"; and "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

I can find no more of such parallels. There are Messianic allusions of a less transcendent character. In a sense, indeed, the whole story is Messianic. "Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is come near: repent and put your trust in the gospel." That is an unmistakably Messianic

pronouncement, and it governs all that follows. But Jesus did not announce himself as the Christ. Later—how much later it is impossible to calculate—he asked his immediate followers what they thought of him, and Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ"; but they were told not to repeat this publicly. Soon afterwards, it would seem, he spoke to them of the kingdom as yet to come in power, and intimated only that it would be within the lifetime of some present. Still later, we hear of the blind man Bartimaeus appealing to him as "Jesus thou son of David," which implies a growing popular belief that he was indeed the expected Messiah. The shouts of the people who ushered him into Jerusalem show this conclusively; but there follows very soon the puzzling question about the relation of David to the Christ by which he seems to have discouraged this particular conception.

And what is the general impression? On this point all careful readers are agreed. The person presented is unmistakably a man. If, indeed, error be an essential property of man, then there does seem to be something lacking to the humanity of Jesus, for there is nowhere the least suggestion either of wrongdoing or of mistaken action: there is not in any of his utterances a single note of regret for things done amiss. In an ordinary man you would reckon that a mark of arrogant self-satisfaction.

This man, then, is either arrogant or extraordinary. And the fact that he is extraordinary is written large over the document. More than once we are told that his familiars were amazed at him. Others were beyond measure astonished, saying, "He has done all things well." Others on the other hand, who had known him from boyhood, were angered by his evident superiority. "Is not this the carpenter," they asked, "the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?" Here you are brought back roughly to the truth of his humanity. And if you can find in him no error, you do find ignorance: that ignorance which is indeed, as St. Athanasius says, proper to man, the proper ignorance of a finite intelligence. No one else attributes this to him, no one takes the measure of his knowledge; but he himself expressly and emphatically speaks of the ignorance of the Son concerning the day and hour of the consummation of prophecy. When the men of Nazareth deride him, his power seems to depart almost wholly from him, and he openly wonders at their unbelief. When he comes to the near prospect of his passion, he is greatly amazed and sore troubled. He avows it: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He prays that, if it be possible, the hour may pass from him. As he hangs on the cross he cries in familiar words of a man conscious

of alienation from his Maker, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" And yet by a strange contradiction, he is reported as speaking with perfect confidence of what will follow this death that he so dreads. He will rise on the third day; he will see his disciples once more in Galilee.

Here, then, is the presentment of a Man, known as such by characteristic limitations of human nature; an extraordinary man, a man about whom there hangs an air of mystery, one in whom are seen the insoluble contradictions which invariably appear in the imperfectly understood. He is man; he is in some sort a representative man: that seems to be implied, possibly with much else, in the title which he assumes—the Son of Man. He is man; but he is something more. He is presented as man; but there peep out, so to say, at intervals the lineaments of that personality which St. Paul has presented—the personality of the Son of God. At last the identity is openly avowed. Jesus is formally examined; the high-priest puts to him the crucial question: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He answers: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Such is the Gospel according to St. Mark. Side by side with this we read two other books, the Gospels known by the names of St. Matthew and St.

Luke. We no longer regard these as they were regarded when the three received the name of the *Synoptics*, because they were thought to afford independently three several presentments of a portraiture practically identical. Rigorous study has made it plain that the writer alike of the First and of the Third Gospel had the text of St. Mark before him, and worked it into his own narrative, the one almost intact, the other with some omissions and changes of order. But they had other matter as well. Each of them has evidently used a collection of discourses, which may have been that of St. Matthew the Apostle. If this were incorporated entire in the First Gospel, it would the more easily disappear as an independent work, and it may thus have bequeathed its reputed authorship to the new book. The writer of the Third Gospel used it more sparingly, but he had copious materials of another sort, as he mentions in his preface, and as appears abundantly in his work. Both evangelists alike seem to have had minor sources for details, which they sometimes preferred to St. Mark ; yet they evidently took his narrative in the main to be the best authority, and worked upon it, as critics have shown, independently of each other. This is noticeable, that they frequently soften, so to say, the sharp lines of humanity in which he portrayed the Son of Man. Of capital interest is the evidence which they afford

that already in their day the ending of St. Mark's Gospel was incomplete. The fact lends support to the conjecture that the book was in fact never finished. This failing, the author of the First Gospel had seemingly heard nothing worthy of record about the Resurrection, except that the risen Lord appeared to the Eleven in Galilee, entrusting them with a world-wide mission and the baptismal formula used in his day. The other evangelist had information which he wove into a rather confused narrative, but it is noteworthy that he, whom we know to have been much interested in St. Paul, was unacquainted with the particulars detailed in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Had he known them he could hardly have failed to work them into his story. Many interesting questions thus arise, at which I can barely glance. I am concerned with them only as illustrating the true nature of the Synoptic tradition. I return to my point, that what is common to the three Gospels is the content of St. Mark. The Synoptic tradition is the tradition of St. Mark.

Once more, what is this tradition? It is the portraiture, modified in the later Gospels, of a man, gentle and yet austere, a master of stern teaching, less than half understood by his disciples, making great demands upon their confidence, and moving forward with fixed purpose to an end which they cannot grasp. It is a figure in every way extra-

ordinary; a figure that rivets the attention of the world; the figure of one who passes the measure of humanity and is yet unmistakably, emphatically, Man.

I ask why such a portraiture was drawn. Why did Mark make his selection of incidents? We shall hardly suppose, with the simple Papias, that he wrote down all he had heard. Why did he emphasize the humanity of Jesus? Why did he draw this in such sharp lines that those who followed him thought it necessary to soften them? It was not that he knew no other lineaments. He was bred in the school of St. Paul: the gospel of St. Paul was his gospel: here and there the features of the Christ whom Paul preached appear through and behind the homelier form of the Son of Man, the Carpenter. What is the purpose of this human document?

I have a suggestion to offer. It is that St. Paul's gospel, the primitive gospel, was found in practice to make for an imperfect apprehension of the real manhood of Jesus Christ. You know the tendency of all Christian ages, appearing now as Docetism, now as Monophysitism, now in the denial of the Lord's human will, now in the refusal to recognise his human limitations—the tendency to convert the Incarnation into a pure theophany. I suggest that St. Paul's teaching about the coming of the Son of God to the death of the cross, and his neglect of the

sayings and doings of Jesus, were being exaggerated in this fashion; that consequently the intimate follower of St. Peter was moved to put on record incidents which illustrated and emphasized the real humanity of the Master.

Whether I have gauged his purpose correctly or not, that is in fact what he did. He portrayed Jesus in his habit as he lived. It is amazing to reflect that such a portraiture was possible, that after so many years of developed teaching about the Christ disciples were able to put on record memories of the Master's life and conversation almost untouched by anything which they had subsequently come to understand in his personality. The record is on this account the more convincing. And its value for us exceeds all calculation. Its intense humanity appeals in our age, as in other ages also, to minds which the more transcendent doctrine of St. Paul would hardly touch. It inspired St. Francis with a passionate love that sought expression in a close reproduction of the method of Jesus and his works of mercy—another sort of imitation than was inculcated by St. Paul, and in a devotion to the Crucified which threw new light upon the doctrine of the atonement. It stirs in the most sluggish an emotion which bears some faint resemblance to St. Paul's vehement self-surrender to the Son of God who loved him and gave himself for him—a devotion

which in its transcendent purity can be compassed only by a mind like his. It is for us in practical truth the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But I remind you that this is not the primitive gospel. You cannot start from this and make the teaching of St. Paul a later development. The gospel of St. Paul came first: the Synoptic tradition came later. It was in effect, if not in purpose, a necessary correction of a possible misunderstanding.

V

THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

WE have considered the witness of St. Paul to the historic personality of the Christ. We have considered in bare outline the three canonical Gospels which seem to have been written after St. Paul's death, possibly at no long interval. We have seen how they present, along with his gospel of the passion and the resurrection, another aspect of the person of Jesus Christ which he almost entirely ignored—an aspect found in certain selected incidents of the Master's life and work. We may now turn to another group of writings, which have been known from the middle of the second century by the name of John.

We have two brief epistles, one apparently addressed to a Church personified as "the elect lady and her children," the other to an individual named Gaius. These letters are remarkable, as not bearing the name of the writer. They are not, however, anonymous. The superscription is that of "The Presbyter"; evidently a well-known personage to

whom this common title was in some special sense appropriated. There is a longer epistle, so called, which is not, however, an epistle in proper form. It has no superscription or address, and seems to be rather a homily, written for the benefit of some to whom the writer could not speak in person. There is no indication of authorship, but the unmistakable evidence of style, to say nothing of external witness, proves it beyond all doubt to be from the same pen as the two epistles. By the same evidence, with the same certainty, the fourth canonical Gospel is recognized as coming from the same hand. We have these writings from a man of conspicuous eminence, who called himself The Presbyter. I need not tell you, who have read his own words, with what a tone of commanding authority he speaks in his homily, or how he claims the most direct and immediate knowledge of the gospel:—

That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the word of life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and declare unto you the life, the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write that

our joy may be fulfilled. And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you; that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

This is no ordinary man. He is one who claims to have known Jesus Christ either in the flesh, like the elder apostles, or by revelation, like St. Paul. Who is he?

You know that from the middle of the second century he has been identified with St. John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee. It seems clear that these writings were first current at Ephesus, or in the province of Asia, and there John is said to have spent his old age. The statement is most positive, and is apparently well authenticated. But you know also that it is beset by extraordinary difficulties, and that we have here one of the most hotly debated questions of our day. It is perhaps not too much to say that if the statement be false, there is a whole set of known facts that are perfectly inexplicable, and if it be true there is another set of known facts which are equally inexplicable.

There is a further complication of which I must remind you. Another book, the Apocalypse, bears the name of John, the writer so calling himself with some emphasis. Who was he? The name was common enough among Jews. At one time the book was supposed by some to be an example of

the writings of Judaizers against St. Paul. It not improbably contains some reminiscences of that controversy; but a fuller study of its allusions to the circumstances of the Roman world has made it fairly certain that we must date it some time after St. Paul's death. Its connection with the province of Asia is evident, and this book also is found, even earlier than the Gospel and the Epistles, to be attributed to the apostle St. John.

Now you could hardly find anywhere two styles more utterly diverse than those of the unnamed Presbyter and of the Apocalyptic John. You may boldly say that one man could not possibly write in both styles with his own hand. There are methods of literature, more used in former days than now, which might do something to bridge the gap. It is conceivable that the splendid rhapsodies of the Apocalypse might be taken down, by a scribe, ignorant of the elements of grammar, from the lips of the same man whose more equable utterances would yield to the pen of a polished writer the sentences of the Gospel and the Epistles. It is conceivable; but it is far from probable.

I shall not discuss this question of authorship. If I could prove to my own satisfaction, and to yours, that the Fourth Gospel was written by John the son of Zebedee, or taken down from his lips, then we should have another first-rate witness to put side by

side with St. Paul. But even so, some qualifications would be needed. The earliest possible date assignable to the Gospel would seem to be about the end of the first century. St. John would then be in extreme old age, and his value as a merely historical witness would be impaired. His value from another point of view would be supreme; but we are concerned with the historical point of view. There are times when it is reasonable to argue on the hypothesis of his authorship, but I am unwilling to use for my present purpose any evidence which is not generally accepted as certain. Therefore I will speak of the Johannine writings only as Christian documents of the end of the first century. If we must name the writer, how will it be to call him by the title which he himself used? Let him be The Presbyter.

It seems to be established that in the second century this title of honour was used to distinguish the contemporaries of the apostles. The First Epistle of Peter shows that it could be used no less of the apostles themselves. Its application is therefore wide. But the writer of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles evidently took the title to himself in a peculiar sense. Now we have references to a certain John, known in Asia during the early years of the second century by this distinctive title of The Presbyter, who is sometimes confused with John the

Apostle, sometimes distinguished from him. Here may be the key to the whole puzzling question. But so slight is our information, so obscure are all the circumstances, that no sure conclusion is at present attainable. I shall ask you only to regard the Johannine writings as the work of a man who belonged to the apostolic age, who described himself distinctively by a title pointing to apostolic connections, and who was qualified to speak in a tone of authority at least as peremptory as that of St. Paul himself.

And what of his Gospel? You will not expect me to say in these few minutes what has been said in close-packed volumes. I can offer only the most sweeping summary. The broad plan is the same as in the other Gospels. There is a detailed account of the Passion and the Resurrection, preceded by selected incidents of the Master's life and teaching. But there is one notable difference on the forefront. The Presbyter begins with a prologue conceived in the terms and the sense of that theology of the Word, which we have seen St. Paul treating as a mystery to be held under reserve. His doctrine is precisely that of St. Paul. The Word, eternally with God—the Word by whom all things were made, who was the life and light of the world, though the world knew him not—the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, the only-begotten of the Father. The

Presbyter begins his homily with a glance at the same doctrine, and a close reader will see traces of it in all that he writes. You may note also, if you will, that in the Apocalypse the name of the glorified Christ in one of his manifestations is the Word of God. The doctrine is fully accepted, and published in the province of Asia without reserve. But observe that although the doctrine of the Word is expressly stated in the prologue of the Gospel, and dominates all that follows, it does not furnish the terms of the narrative. You are told that the Word was made flesh: henceforward you hear only of what he did in the visible reality of his human life.

That is to say, the Presbyter essays the same task as the other evangelists. But he carries it through with a great difference in effect. The difference has, I think, been exaggerated. I do not know how the evangelist who tells the story of the Samaritan woman can be said to avoid representing Jesus in contact with sinners, nor how the portrayer of the household of Bethany can be thought to exclude him from human relations and affections. On the other hand, Matthew and Luke have some traces of the characteristic Johannine manner. In a famous passage about the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son they seem to anticipate even the style of the Presbyter. But, exaggeration apart, the difference is great.

One thing the four evangelists have in common. They are alike unhistorical in method. They narrate selected and isolated incidents. They do not attempt a continuous and connected story. There is no biography of Jesus Christ, and no such book can be written to any purpose. Those who essay it on the Synoptic basis are confronted by broad stretches of silence, and if they try to fill the gaps from the Fourth Gospel they entangle themselves in a worse confusion. The Synoptics and the Presbyter alike present only selected incidents.

But the selections are altogether different. Until you come to the Passion, they have very few points of contact. There are grounds for thinking that the Presbyter knew the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke; but he used them, if at all, with supreme independence. He selects discourses and actions not only distinct from theirs, but of a distinct character. You cannot avoid the conclusion, as you read, that he set out with a wholly different purpose. We have seen that St. Mark's object was probably to present in its bare simplicity the real manhood of Jesus Christ; to do this by way of preamble to the gospel of his death and resurrection. The object of the Presbyter is even more evident. He will show the reality of the Divine Word incarnate in that manhood. It is declared to the seeing eye by intelligible signs; it is revealed by enigmatic

teaching to those who can understand. He does not pretend that all could see and all could understand. It is he who says so emphatically that even the brethren of Jesus did not believe on him. He shows the Jews—for so, after the fashion of his own day, he calls the opponents of the gospel—scandalized and bewildered by the most self-revealing utterances of the Lord. He shows disciples puzzled and repelled by hard sayings. He shows the Twelve themselves, even at the Last Supper, putting unintelligent questions, and then saying "Now speakest thou plainly and not allusively: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." And the Master answers with sad meaning, "Do ye now believe?" No, the Fourth Gospel does not suggest that Jesus was always recognizable even as the Christ. It shows the Incarnate Word always revealing himself, always misunderstood. You may say that whereas the other evangelists describe one scene of transfiguration, here we have a perpetual transfiguration, but the cloud is always at hand to dim the eyes of the beholder.

This preoccupation of the evangelist affects not only his choice of materials, but also the order in which he presents them. I have insisted on the absence of a consecutive story from all the Gospels alike; but the others do show some progression.

It is true that even St. Mark tells of a definitely Messianic declaration from heaven at the baptism of Jesus; but it is not suggested that this was generally understood or even known. It stands apart. For the rest, we see Jesus gradually unfolding his purpose to the disciples, and more tardily to others, until at the last moment he declares himself the Christ. There is nothing of the kind in the Fourth Gospel. Thus the story of the purging of the Temple, so closely connected with the final avowal of Messianic mission, is here told at the very beginning of the Gospel. There is even less of narrative order than in the Synoptics.

Then what order is there? You cannot give close attention to the book without seeing how carefully it is arranged. And the arrangement is symbolic. You would say that here is a writer, familiar with the art of mystical interpretation, who is consciously putting into his own work the characteristics that were sought in the old scriptures. The significance of each event recorded is more important than the event, and the events are related not by sequence of time but by a thread of argument. Everything is subject to comment, and the commentary merges in the text. In the third chapter you cannot tell where the words of Jesus to Nicodemus end and the reflections of the evangelist begin; lower down you can perhaps see more plainly

where the Baptist ceases to address his disciples, but the narrative glides into theology without a break.

Is the whole book, then, pure symbolism? It has been suggested. It has been maintained. You may be asked to read the book as one that does not pretend to any historic character at all. It will be a theological discourse thrown symbolically into a narrative form. Even the account of the Passion and the Resurrection, which is of course historical in outline, is said to be filled with purely symbolic details. The author is supposed to have had no historical materials apart from those contained in the former Gospels, and perhaps some few relics of oral tradition. He was perfectly orthodox, thoroughly imbued with the teaching of St. Paul, steeped in the traditions of the Church, and profoundly conversant with divine truth: to bring that teaching, those traditions, that truth into strong relief, he wove beautiful myths about the person of the Lord Jesus. He drew a portrait theologically true, but such as depicted no lineaments that anyone had actually seen.

Can we accept this account? Let us consider the question without prejudice. It should be possible to do so; for this explanation of the Gospel need not be in conflict with any principles to which we adhere. It is put forward by men of indisputable

scholarship ; it is maintained by men of unquestionable orthodoxy. It alleges nothing against the truth of the Gospel ; for the truth of the Gospel is a truth of portraiture, not of detailed incidents. You may sometimes find a more truthful historic portrait in a work of fiction than in the pages of a dry and accurate annalist. Nor is there any reason why the divine truth which is taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son should not be taught in fictitious narrative on a larger scale. Let us put aside all prejudice, then, and ask whether this account of the Fourth Gospel can be accepted.

I do not believe a word of it. I can find no reason for believing that a book so conceived would gain acceptance in the Church of the second century. The Christians of that age were not so wholly uncritical as some may think : witness their discrimination against the apocryphal Gospels. Indeed this book was challenged on doctrinal grounds, and some of its variations from the Synoptic tradition were pointed out by opponents. If these stories of the life of Jesus, so different from those most in evidence elsewhere, had been long current in Asia, or if they were known to rest on the authority of one of the Twelve, then their reception is intelligible. If they were invented as symbolic myths, they might not have been resented, but they would not easily have passed as history. The evidence, however, is so

obscure that we must not speak too positively on this head. With greater confidence I would refer to the tokens of the eyewitness scattered through the book. These are not in all cases such as might be introduced by an expert writer of fiction, even if we could suppose an author of symbolic myths to be careful of such things. In one case, the story of the visit of Peter and another disciple to the tomb, there are obscurities of language which indicate a picture of details so clearly impressed on the memory of the narrator that he took no trouble to make his description clear.¹

That other disciple, never mentioned by name, but called "the disciple whom Jesus loved," is expressly said to be the witness upon whom the author of the Gospel relies. The twenty-first chapter, as you know, forms an epilogue, evidently not by the hand of the evangelist himself. The writer says, "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things." I do not think that you can press the last words into an assertion that the Disciple wrote the book in its completeness. They would be sufficiently exact if he wrote some rough notes which were afterwards worked into form. There is therefore no necessary identification of the Presbyter with the Beloved Disciple. But the Gospel, by whatever author composed, is said to contain the

¹ See note B.

testimony of the Disciple. His witness is spoken of in the present. It does not follow that he is still living; his abiding testimony is in the book. Indeed the epilogue seems to have been written for the express purpose of accounting for his death, by the correction of an erroneous impression about a supposed promise of the Lord. He was evidently a conspicuous person, well known to those for whom the book was written. The correction would have had little interest for a subsequent generation. We may therefore conclude positively that the epilogue was written not long after the death of the man commonly known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The Gospel itself must have been written earlier; it is said to be founded, at least in the main, upon his testimony, and it bears on its face marks of this origin.

What then is the historic value of the Gospel? It contains exactly what St. Mark's Gospel contains—reminiscences of one of the Twelve. But this man's reminiscences are not so much of deeds and words. He is far more concerned with the inner meanings of things. It is he who recalls the promise of the Paraclete made by the Lord the night before he suffered: "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you." The Disciple has long been pondering, in the power of the Spirit, the things which he remembers. He

reports, perhaps, not so much the words of the Master as his inmost thoughts. He interprets. The gospel, as I have said before, was from the beginning a record of facts interpreted. But the interpretation is theology. What of the facts? The Disciple of the Fourth Gospel does not fail us. Even more careless of biographical details than the Synoptic writers, he does nevertheless convey some biographical impressions—an impression, barely hinted at by St. Mark, that Jesus was for some time publicly known as a disciple of John the Baptist; an impression of longer and wider activity than is elsewhere indicated. But these are small matters. What he adds of importance is an element of portraiture—a portraiture not of the habits but of the personality of the Master. A critical comparison of the Gospels will show how much of our ordinary conception of the Man Jesus comes from this source. We do not usually distinguish the sources. We read the books together, and read them into each other; and we do well, for so we arrive at a more complete and rounded presentment. But it is good also to distinguish. You then find that where on the one hand St. Mark presents a Man who betrays from time to time bewildering characteristics inexplicable on any ordinary theory of manhood, the Disciple whom Jesus loved portrays on the other hand the Eternal Word, made true man, living a human life

under human conditions, but always conscious of himself, and from time to time letting appear lightning flashes of his divinity. It is the same personality, diversely seen from without and from within.

This mode of presentment makes the gospel of the Disciple identical at all points with that of St. Paul. But St. Paul's gospel, as we have seen, was the primitive gospel. You may not think of the Johannine gospel as a late development, growing out of the simple elements preserved in the Synoptics. If there was any progress at all in that first age, Christianity began with the conception of the Christ as the Son of God, sent into the world to be humbled even to death and to be declared in his true nature by the resurrection. Thence it recoiled a while for the purpose of realizing the true humanity of this Christ. Finally, holding fast this realized humanity, it returned in full flood to the primal thought. The Johannine gospel is the primitive gospel.

VI

THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH

I HAVE so far treated the witnesses to the gospel of Jesus Christ as individuals. They must be so treated, and their personal testimony must be weighed. But no more than other men were they merely individuals. I have made a partial study of St. Paul's environment, regarding him as an individual man in contact with other individual men. But this treatment is inadequate. It must be supplemented by a consideration which I have hitherto avoided.

All the witnesses alike lived in the community of the Christian Church. We must be careful neither to neglect nor to exaggerate the importance of this common life. We must get behind the vast structure of thought which is for us the idea of the Church ; but we must remember that this vast structure has grown organically from a beginning. We are not to take the scattered indications of that beginning, which are all that we have, and combine them into a fancy picture without regard to what came after-

wards. As causes must be studied in their effects, so the Church of the first century must be understood in part by reference to the Church of succeeding centuries. But first the indications must be gathered.

Among the most important is the word itself. The *Ecclesia of God* was not a new conception in the minds of the first preachers of the gospel. The Greek word had long been adopted as a title of the Holy People, the nation which God had chosen, of which the Christ was to come. It is commonly used by the writers of the Septuagint in its native Greek sense, meaning the public assembly of the people; but there are passages where it stands for the nation regarded as an abstract unity. The later use of it by the Jews, whether in Judæa or in the Dispersion, is obscure, but it bursts into full and characteristic use in the writers of the New Testament.

The earliest example is in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, where it already appears a familiar term. Those whom the Apostle is addressing are "the Church of Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." They are "imitators of the Churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus." They are held together by brotherly love, but they are also an organized community and are told to admonish the disorderly—the word being one that is commonly used of soldiers who break rank. In the salutation, the *Ecclesia* might mean only the

assembly of Thessalonian believers, the epistle being read to them when gathered together ; but its sense is determined by other passages. Elsewhere, as in the directions about procedure given by St. Paul to the Corinthians, the *Ecclesia* is certainly at times the assembly of the faithful ; but even there the word seems to pass imperceptibly into the sense of the permanently organized community which comes together on occasion.

There was probably a tendency on the part of the believers in each town to settle down in isolation, receiving as brethren those who came with credentials from other places, but otherwise living their own life with their own traditions. There was no central sanctuary, as under the old law, no central organization of worship or discipline. The current use of the word *Ecclesia* shows that the disciples believed themselves to be the true representatives of the old order ; they were the remnant of Israel ; they were carrying on the traditions of the fathers and the prophets, while those who adhered to the old forms in the letter were the disobedient and gainsaying majority. More than once in the history of the holy seed had this condition of parties been observed, so that the idea was not unfamiliar. But this true remnant was held together by purely spiritual ties : the ancient sanctuary and the ancient organization were in the hands of those who rejected

the Christ. The conviction was slowly working into Christian minds that the ancient forms were in fact emptied of meaning in the presence of the new conditions. As Gentiles were gathered in without becoming proselytes to Judaism—and we know what heartburnings were caused by this—the growing Christian Dispersion was less and less connected with the old law, less and less dependent on the principle of unity which that law supplied.

We can trace this process obscurely in St. Paul's Epistles, more clearly, but in more artificial order, in the Acts of the Apostles. We know how St. Paul himself pressed on the development, eagerly and yet cautiously, careful always to give no needless offence to the Judaizers, though resisting them without regard for consequences when a principle was at stake. But he was not unaware of the peril accompanying this change—the danger that the new Israel of God might become a mere loose aggregate of congregations. Since there was everywhere a spiritual sanctuary, since everywhere Christ himself was present with any two or three gathered in his name, such a development was only too possible. St. Paul knew it. Indeed we know the pressing nature of the peril chiefly from his earnest endeavours to guard against it. He was perhaps aware that his own position, the independence of his Apostolate, rendered the faithful whom he himself had

gathered in the more susceptible to the danger. He set himself to impress upon them as urgently as possible the duty of active combination with the brethren elsewhere; they were to unite in the most open and palpable indications of brotherhood; there were to be frequent messages and greetings; the great system of epistles, the few relics of which form the bulk of our New Testament scriptures, seems to have grown out of this practice; above all the reality of brotherhood was to be enforced by the exercise of practical benevolence, of direct almsgiving; and the Judæan Christians in particular, for some reason which is not clearly ascertained, were objects of this benevolence.

We see the Church being built up then as a nation, scattered through the world like the Dispersion of the Jews, but united by a religious consciousness. St. Peter's Epistle shows the appropriate phrases in use. It is addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion" in various provinces of the East. There is no ground for supposing that the *Diaspora* here mentioned is the Jewish Diaspora, for the Apostle goes on to appropriate to the Christian community other terms also which formerly belonged to Israel: "Ye are an elect race, a loyal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people . . . which in time past were no people, but are now the people of God."

How is this community related to that Kingdom of God which Jesus Christ, according to the Synoptic

tradition, declared to be near at hand? That there is a connection is evident, for the Kingdom so announced was the Messianic Kingdom, and the Messianic Kingdom was thought of as a great renewal and restoration of Israel. When we find the disciples of Jesus Christ speaking of a new Israel formed from a remnant of the old with a vast increase from among the Gentiles, we cannot doubt that for their minds this was in some sort the realization of his promise. Is the Church, then, identical with the Kingdom? Are these merely two names for the same idea? Jesus Christ himself seems to have spoken ordinarily of the Kingdom: the apostolic writers for the most part—though not, by the way, St. Peter—speak of the Church, and hardly at all of the Kingdom. It has been suggested that they dropped the use of the latter word in order to avoid the misunderstandings which it might occasion in the Roman world, and adopted the word *Ecclesia* as equivalent. But the equivalence is perhaps not so complete. The Kingdom seems to be spoken of in the double sense of which the word is capable. It is at once the sovereignty of God, and the region within which that sovereignty is ordinarily exercised. The latter sense only is covered by the word *Ecclesia*, and that imperfectly. You may say that the Church is the organization of the Kingdom. You will then have to think of it as an attempt to realize the

Kingdom under adverse conditions, and that will perhaps bring you as near as possible to the true meaning of the word.

Is there any evidence that Jesus himself foresaw and foretold this mode of development? I speak, you will understand, of purely historical evidence, such as can be presented to those who have no theological prepossessions. There is an obvious difficulty, in that our records of what he said and did were written when the development was complete, and it may be said—is freely said—that they are coloured by the event. The evidence therefore, small in amount as it is, needs careful sifting.

In the first place there are the parables which describe a development of the Kingdom in circumstances of difficulty and confusion, indicating its gradual and slow extension, and the intermingling of baser elements which are only at the last to be eliminated. These parables point inevitably to a social organization of the Kingdom in the hands of men who are by no means all alike imbued with the spirit of the Kingdom. The form of this teaching, its pithy construction, its occasional obscurity, should make it all but certain that the substance is faithfully transmitted; unless indeed it be supposed that the whole parabolic scheme was subsequently invented—a suggestion too wildly improbable for consideration. As we have seen,

there is no ground for supposing the parables, in their actual form, to have been generally current during the first Christian generation, so that we cannot safely attribute the form taken by the Church to their direct influence; but there is good reason for thinking that what was taught to the public obscurely in parables was explained more precisely to the Twelve and to others intimate with the Master. It is, then, highly probable that a scheme of development was at least sketched in outline for the future guidance of the disciples.

St. Mark records a very emphatic assurance given by the Lord. "Verily I say unto you, there be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God fully come in power." The use of the perfect indicates the abiding achievement of the Kingdom. But it is *in power*. Is this qualification important? Does it mean the achievement of the Kingdom in potentiality? The word, so used, has become for us the driest of technical terms, but we must remember that for people speaking Greek there was no such rigid technicality. Greek philosophy took the terms of common speech and merely guarded with precision some sense inherent in their ordinary use. Can we suppose our Lord, whatever idiom he spoke, to have said something which might be accurately rendered in this way? You

may observe that the other evangelists, following St. Mark, drop the word altogether. St. Luke has, "till they see the Kingdom of God"; St. Matthew, "till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." That is evidently an interpretation, suggested by other expressions in the Gospels. Immediately before this passage we find all three evangelists recording words of our Lord about the future appearance of the Son of Man, "when he cometh in the glory of his Father." Here again St. Luke interprets: "when he cometh in his own glory and the glory of the Father." But this, again, you must compare with the saying of the Lord to Caiaphas: "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." St. Matthew repeats this from St. Mark almost letter by letter; St. Luke has some verbal variations, omits the last words, and adds one word of explanation—"at the right hand of the Power *of God*." Here "the Power" stands in Jewish fashion for the Name of God. Power and glory are brought together in a similar saying drawn with an insignificant variation by Matthew and Luke from their common source: "They shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with accompaniment of power and much glory." Immediately before you read: "And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

Then follows a saying which is perhaps related to our first quotation from St. Mark: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished." It looks very much like an alternative recollection of what St. Mark records, especially when you consider the connection in St. Mark with a stricture upon "this adulterous and sinful generation." You must bear in mind that no part of the record bears more evident marks of being worked over by the writers than the great eschatological discourse in which these sayings are embedded.

There is no doubt that all these utterances alike, remembered or reduced to writing, were understood by the Christians of the first age to be an assurance that some then living should see the final establishment of the Kingdom. The question why they were allowed to have this expectation is for theologians: the historian does but note the fact. The question whether such an expectation had been actually impressed upon them by the Lord is perhaps of a mixed order; but in view of his emphatic declaration that he himself, speaking as a man to his fellow-men, did not know the day or hour of the consummation, it can hardly be doubted that he may have conveyed the impression; and if all his words are correctly reported, he certainly did so. But do the words recorded by St. Mark actually mean

this? The phraseology is different from that of the other passages, and I suggest that the achievement of the Kingdom *in power* may very well signify its potential activity in the Church.

But did the Lord himself never speak of the Church by that name, or by its equivalent in the idiom of Palestine? There are, as you know, two places in St. Matthew where the word is found—in the promise to St. Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church"; and in the passage ending, "If he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the Publican." The latter need not imply more than a customary assembly of the brethren, though the history of the word suggests a larger meaning. The former passage is more critical. You must divest yourself of the ideas connected with our secondary use of the word, and so reduce the metaphor of building to its true proportions. It gains rather than loses by the process, for it recalls the more clearly the Messianic language of the Old Testament. If Jesus Christ actually used this language, above all if he thus emphatically called the Church his own, there is nothing more to be said.

The text is unquestionable; but it may be asked whether his words are exactly recorded. It has been suggested that he actually spoke of the Kingdom, as on other occasions, but that the word

Ecclesia, having come into common use, was substituted—the two words being identical in meaning. It has been suggested that the whole context is but an interpretation of the brief record of St. Mark, thrown into narrative form. Neither explanation is absurd, though the former does provoke the unanswerable question why the substitution should have been made here, and nowhere else. Neither would be suggested but for the exceptional occurrence of the word in the canonical Gospels. The difficulty caused by this tends to vanish when you observe how little is recorded of the more intimate conversations between the Master and his disciples. You will reflect that he may have spoken of the Church, as distinct from the Kingdom, only in such familiar intercourse. Indeed the general, undisputed, use of the word by the first brethren seems to demand the supposition of its use by the Master. A term of spontaneous origin, like the name of *Christian*, might be expected to make slow and tentative progress.

I labour this point for two reasons. First, because the presentment of the historic personality of Jesus Christ is affected. It may be inaccurate in history, as it certainly is inadequate in theology, to call him the Founder of the Church; but it is important to show him in his relation to the Church. If the Church were an afterthought, a mere consequence

of his doctrine growing up spontaneously among his disciples, then he himself remains isolated, the author perhaps of some fruitful ideas, the stimulator in all ages of noble thoughts, but organically unconnected with historic Christianity. A very different conception of him you will have if you think of him as gathering into his hand the threads of the Old Testament, renewing the faithful remnant of Israel, and starting the elect people of God upon a world-wide mission. That was certainly how St. Paul understood the relation. To his mind the Church was in some sort Christ himself, the Body of Christ.

My second reason for pressing the point is that a society so conceived is a better historic witness than one which has come casually into being. It is needless to insist on the importance of the corporate witness of the Church. The tradition of a society is very tenacious; the tradition of a society existing in such ramifications as those of the apostolic Church, with frequent intercourse of parts, much emulation, and some jealousy of a baser sort, is intensely conservative. It is so far liable to accretion that the witness of individuals dating from early days must always be sought as a corrective. We have that corrective in the apostolic writings. From the purely historic point of view, the tradition of the Church, guarded by reference to the books of the New Testament, is of first-rate value. I need only

remind you how identical is that tradition, crystallized in the Creeds, with the gospel of St. Paul. The Church has shown comparatively small interest in the details of the Lord's human life. It has carefully guarded the truth of his humanity; but no remote allusion to his Galilean activity has found its way into the Creeds. It has carefully testified to the fact of the Resurrection, but the bare fact has sufficed: a comparison of the conclusions of the four Gospels will show that no detailed account of the events was ever generally current, and none therefore could pass into the general tradition of the Church. What we know on this head we know from individual witnesses: the witness of the Church is simply that Jesus Christ, having been crucified, dead, and buried, rose on the third day from the dead. It is easy to understand how this broad statement of fact could be universally current among the Christian communities along with the most diverse accounts of what happened on the third day, what was seen, and by whom it was related. And such a simple record of one stupendous fact is precisely what a corporate tradition like that which we are considering may be trusted to maintain. Since the existence of the Christian Church rested on the Resurrection, and since the belief in the Resurrection could hardly have originated without some stupendous stimulus in experience, the existence of the Church is in itself

weighty evidence for the historical fact of the Resurrection.

In a far less degree the tradition of the Church is evidence also for the unique circumstances of the Master's birth. His birth of a virgin mother is a fact of which there can obviously be, in the strict sense, no historical evidence at all. History can only ascertain whether he was believed to have been so born, when the belief arose, and on what it was founded. The tradition of the Church, as far back as it can be traced, shows such belief. The origin of the belief cannot be ascertained. There is no ground for supposing that it took its rise from the publication of the stories contained in the first and third Gospels. It is far more probable that those narratives did but reduce to form what was already the current belief. Their intrinsic historical value has to be considered apart; but I think it will be allowed that, unless they can be traced to contemporary and documentary evidence, they add nothing to the testimony of the general Christian tradition. So far as the truth of the virgin-birth of Jesus Christ has any relation to history at all, it is so related as resting on the fixed belief of the historic Christian community.

For the details of the Lord's life there is no such witness. Stories of his sayings and doings were undoubtedly current. Human experience can assure

us of that ; but human experience assures us no less that such stories would be inaccurately repeated, and would soon be overlaid with legend. Some of the apocryphal Gospels show precisely what might be expected. In this regard the tradition of the Church, local or general, can be trusted for only one service. If a book appeared, purporting to give an account of the Lord Jesus, those to whom it was first submitted would know something of its source. It would be received with suspicion if it were not known to come from one who had a fund of trustworthy information. That is why scholars labour to ascertain the manner in which the canonical Gospels were first received. For the tradition that is valuable here is not that of a subsequent century, or even of a half-century, but that of the time when the book was actually produced.

From such books alone we draw our knowledge of the human life of Jesus. They contain, as I have said, late reminiscences. They do not form the original gospel. They are not the foundation upon which the Creed of the Church is built. In the Creed is stated with bare simplicity the original gospel. The earliest form of Creed that can be traced is that which the eunuch of Queen Candace, according to some copies of the Acts of the Apostles, recited before his baptism : "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." From this nucleus the whole

Christology of the Church has grown. The Christ of conciliar definition is less the Christ of the Synoptics than the Christ who was preached before the Synoptics were written. The faith of Chalcedon is the gospel of St. Paul. The Christ of Chalcedon is the historic Christ.

VII

THE RESURRECTION

I. THE HISTORIC FACT

THE Christian religion depends upon a Person —the Lord Jesus Christ. A great part of our religious thought is independent of this personality, and might continue unmoved if it could be shown that no such person existed, or that all our beliefs about him are pious delusions; but such religious thoughts so severed would not be Christianity. The Christian religion assumes the historic reality of the Person and the truth of the main facts recorded about him. And this assumption is not merely additional to our religious sentiments in general and separable from them: it colours them all; so that even the Christian belief in God differs in important particulars from what is common to other forms of theism. If then the assumption be false, our religion is a mass of falsehood: it may be mixed up with much truth, but all that is peculiarly Christian is false, a darkening of counsel which ought to be

cleared away as soon as possible. The historic record of Jesus Christ is therefore of first-rate importance. Our Christian faith may transcend history, but it starts from the record: a man cannot leap into the air except from firm ground, and the boldest leap of faith is taken from a sure standpoint of fact. We must, therefore, make sure of the record.

This does not mean that a multitude of details recorded of Jesus Christ must be historically proved. It means only that certain great facts must be established. Foremost among these are the facts of his death and resurrection. Death is, of course, included as a necessary preamble in the idea of resurrection. The Christ in whom we trust is he who rose from the dead: this fact, and this alone, makes the rest of the record significant. As St. Paul says, "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." Failing this the resurrection might have a certain value as a beautiful dream, a spiritual allegory; it would not have the value that is required in the basis of faith.

What can be historically established about the resurrection of Jesus Christ? There is much that cannot be so established, for the subject carries us beyond the range of human experience. There is no little confusion, even about what is recorded as matter of experimental knowledge, and some of the evidence is doubtful. It is practically established

beyond question that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified at Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate, at a date which can be determined within a brief range of years. It is not seriously disputed that he died upon the cross. The assertion that having died he lived once more, visibly, in the presence of men who bore witness to the fact, is the historic basis of faith. We stand on no mere affirmation of the immortality of the soul, or of his continued personal activity after death in some purely spiritual mode of existence. The assertion is that in his case a new thing was done; the effect of death was reversed; he lived once more in the body, and this bodily existence was a phenomenal fact.

What is our evidence for these things? It will not do to say, with Westcott, that Christ still works, therefore he lives; for that argument carries us into the region of spiritual powers apprehended by faith. Even a delusion, if associated with great spiritual truths, may seem to work marvels. We are now considering the historic basis of faith, and can use only historical evidence. I will briefly set out what evidence we have.

The first in point of date is contained in the earlier epistles of St. Paul, which were written about twenty years after the events recorded. It is needless to point out how in these letters the fact of the resurrection is everywhere assumed. In the First

Epistle to the Thessalonians and the First to the Corinthians, there is something more than assumption. St. Paul argues upon the fact, and that in some detail. He treats the resurrection of Christ as the earnest of our resurrection; he therefore marshals the evidence for it, and has something to say respecting its nature.

And first, he writes down the information he had received: "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the Twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the Apostles." Here is a careful enumeration of appearances, and the beginning of them is carefully dated on the third day after the crucifixion and burial. Two eye-witnesses are expressly named, for an obvious reason. St. Paul writes elsewhere that three years after his conversion he made the acquaintance of Cephas and James, but of no other apostles. They were undoubtedly his informants, and he names them, as having seen the risen Lord singly and separately; but they told him also of appearances to others, and to a great company of disciples at once. He had afterwards made the acquaintance of other apostles,

and of the brethren generally in Judæa; it is impossible to doubt that he had verified the statements; he had probably conversed with many of the five hundred, or he would not so confidently affirm that the greater part of them still survived. Thus St. Paul relies on the authority of contemporary and living witnesses. His method is eminently historical. Moreover, there is this to be considered. He was writing to men who were disposed to be sceptical on the subject of the resurrection in general, and some of whom were disposed to question his authority. He was bound, therefore, to be careful in establishing his facts. He was lightly regarded by some as being an imperfect apostle, because not an eyewitness of the Lord's actual ministry. If he were inaccurate, if his record differed in the least from that of the other apostles, there were hostile critics ready to pounce on the discrepancy. He kept, therefore, on the surest ground. We know that other stories of appearances of the risen Lord were current, and St. Paul had probably heard them; but, if so, he would not include them in his record of the tradition that he had received. He records certain appearances, certain phenomena, reported on trustworthy evidence. Where shall we find any historical fact better attested?

But St. Paul adds something of his own. "Last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared

to me also." Here we have his own uncorroborated testimony. Our acceptance of it will depend on our confidence in his veracity and his freedom from self-deception or hallucination. He spoke with entire confidence himself; he grounded his apostolate partly on this appearance; "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" He does not give particulars of the appearance in any of his writings. It is probable that he did so habitually in speech. In the Acts of the Apostles, and in one of those sections of the book which bear evident marks of being written by one of his companions, he is reported as declaring publicly at Jerusalem that he had seen the Lord in a trance as he was praying in the Temple; but I would rather put that aside as secondary evidence. He is certainly not referring to the heavenly vision which he told the Corinthians he had enjoyed, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, some fourteen years previously; for that would not be a vision of the same kind which he reports of the Twelve, or rather the Eleven, and of the five hundred, and it is essential to his argument that his sight of the risen Lord was of the same kind as theirs. It is true that he marks it by one unexplained difference; the Lord appeared to him "as unto one born out of due time." Why he compared himself to an abortive birth is not clear. He connects the comparison with the fact that the

appearance to him was the last recorded, but in this connection it is not obviously appropriate. He connects it with his unworthiness to be called an apostle because of his previous hostility ; but if this should imply that he was an imperfectly developed apostle it would be in conflict with his most emphatic assertions. The only thing certain is that he marks the appearance to him as differing in some striking respect from the rest, though it was, as the argument requires, of the same kind.

You will observe that St. Paul says nothing about the grave, except as barely mentioning the burial. He does not in so many words say that the body of Christ left the sepulchre ; he says nothing about the open and empty tomb which is so prominent in other accounts of the resurrection. He says nothing, moreover, about the appearances of the risen Lord, except the bare fact that he was seen. We must not assume that St. Paul was ignorant of other accounts, or that he considered them false. The only thing certain is that he considered them, if true, unnecessary or useless for his argument. He set out the evidence of the resurrection purely for the purpose of this argument. Can we find anything in the argument which will throw light on the meaning of the evidence ?

We must carefully distinguish St. Paul's inferential speculations on the resurrection from his testimony

to observed facts, but we may use the inferences to explain the observation. He argues from the resurrection of the Lord to our future resurrection, which he conceives to be of the same kind. And how does he conceive it? He says that the dead will be raised with a body. But bodies are of various kinds; and the risen body need not correspond more closely to the buried body than a living plant answers to the seed from which it has sprung. He alleges four positive differences. The body that died and was buried is corruptible, dishonoured, weak; it is raised incorruptible, glorious, powerful: it was buried an animal body; it is raised a spiritual body. To inquire into the meaning of these terms would be to examine the whole range of St. Paul's physiology and psychology. That is needless for our present purpose. It is sufficient to observe that the body of the resurrection is supposed to be extraordinarily changed from what it was. It is not an altogether new body, for the change corresponds to what St. Paul expects to take place in the living at the last trump. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Writing to the Thessalonians, some months earlier, he had described the same change in other words: "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are

alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds; to meet the Lord in the air." Much later, when writing to the Philippians towards the end of his life, he used yet another expression: "We wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory." Here is an echo of the words: "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory." The unvarying assertion is that the body, without losing its proper identity, will undergo a marvellous change.

Another expression calls for attention. "Flesh and blood," says St. Paul, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The meaning of this might be more certainly ascertained if St. Paul were perfectly consistent in his use of the word *flesh*. But he is not. "Flesh and blood" cannot stand here, as it does elsewhere, for human nature. It stands parallel to *corruption*; that is to say, it indicates a condition of things which cannot survive in the new order. But he says immediately afterwards, "This corruptible must put on incorruption." That which was in the state of corruption must, without losing its identity, pass into the state of incorruption. Therefore also that which was in the state of flesh and blood must pass into a state more conformable to the kingdom of God. He does not say that that which is flesh

and blood must be left behind ; else it will follow that what is corruptible also must be left behind. That which is corruptible abides, putting on incorruption : that which is flesh and blood abides, putting on a new condition.

How then do these speculations bear on St. Paul's witness to the observed fact ? They show what he gathered to be the condition of the risen Lord whom he, like Peter and James and the five hundred brethren, had seen. It was a body that he saw ; not a corruptible body, but an incorruptible ; not an animal body, but a spiritual ; not an ordinary body of flesh and blood, but something more glorious. Yet it was the body of Jesus, and recognizable, though marvellously changed. A minute examination of the supposed changes will not help us, for St. Paul's physiology is not ours, nor yet his psychology. What is of abiding importance is the fact that the body of Jesus, which had been slain and buried, was seen living in a new and perhaps inexplicable condition. That is what St. Paul testifies.

Let us now turn to other witnesses. With one possible exception, to which I will come presently, there is none to compare with St. Paul in point of directness at first hand. There is a mass of floating traditions, of personal memories. But these were collected and recorded, we know not when or by whom. Let it be granted that the Gospel according

to St. Mark contains the personal memories of St. Peter; still it does not come from his own hand, and the loss of its original conclusion has cost us almost the whole of his witness to the resurrection. Let it be granted that our third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are from the hand of St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul; still his collection of memories and traditions will not compare as evidence with St. Paul's own testimony. Again there are considerable discrepancies in the recorded memories. That is not at all surprising. Here are several persons engaged in certain amazing transactions; they are excited; they are alternating between the extremes of grief and hope; they store up in memory what they have seen and heard. Years afterwards their stories are written down. It would be surprising indeed if there were no discrepancies. If they agreed in every detail, we should suspect collusion; we should say that here was a made-up story. The discrepancies go to prove the faithfulness of the records. But they do inevitably diminish the historical value of the evidence for the various details. No one can say that there is good and conclusive evidence for the sequence of events on and after the day of the resurrection. It is impossible, that is to say, to construct a complete historical narrative. The witnesses contradict each other. But when witnesses so contradicting each other, and demonstrating their

honesty by their very contradictions, agree entirely on one clear and simple issue of fact, their evidence becomes valuable. Now all the witnesses agree in this, that early in the morning of the third day the grave in which the dead body of Jesus had been laid was found open and empty. Where was the Body? It had mysteriously disappeared.

Only two accounts of the removal of the body are known to have been current. A story was put about by hostile Jews that it was secretly removed by disciples. This story was current, as we know, when the Gospel according to St. Matthew was written: it is mentioned as matter of common notoriety by St. Justin Martyr in his controversy with Trypho the Jew; it is extant in certain rabbinical writings. The other account is found in the book known as the Gospel according to Peter. It purports to be a description of what was seen by the soldiers guarding the sepulchre. Two men were seen descending from heaven with great light, at whose approach the stone rolled itself away, and they entered the tomb; thence they returned leading a third man, a cross following. Their heads reached unto heaven, but the head of the third man overtopped the heavens. This narrative is interesting chiefly as showing how the Christian imagination could run riot. Nothing is known of the date or source of the book. It was read as genuine in some parts of the Church in the

second century ; Justin Martyr may have known it ; it may be of the first century. But observe how this fantastic story of the resurrection contrasts with the traditions generally current among Christians, which are gathered up in the canonical Gospels. There are some strange stories indeed in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, but no one pretends to have witnessed the actual resurrection ; no one attempts to account for the disappearance of the body. The grave is found open and empty : that is all. Afterwards come the appearances of the risen Lord to various disciples. I think the story of the open empty sepulchre deserves to rank among the best authenticated facts of history. It does not depend exclusively on Christian evidence. The Jewish story of the stolen body, taken for what it is worth, shows that among the enemies of Christianity also there was a record that could not be denied of the grave found open and empty, of the body mysteriously gone.

One piece of evidence seems to me more immediate than the rest. It is the story told in the fourth Gospel of the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre. I do not touch the question of the authorship of the Gospel ; I say only that in this brief passage there seem to be unmistakable marks of a narrative told by an eyewitness. The minuteness which describes John as stooping down and looking in and seeing the linen cloths lying, while Peter afterwards enters and

examines the cloths—no other word does justice to the distinction marked in the original—this minuteness is compatible with the strange theory, propounded by one whom I respect very highly, that the whole story is conscious allegory. It is quite another matter when you read the description of the way in which the cloths were lying. This description has baffled all commentators. Yet it is most particular and minute. Now a man who has seen certain things which have indelibly impressed themselves on his memory, so that when he recalls them they are as present to his vision, may quite naturally describe them in terms which no one but himself can understand. His mental vision explains all to him. But a man who writes a fictitious description formulates the scene first in thought and word, and will not arrive at this sort of obscurity. I cannot read the story told in the fourth Gospel as anything but the narrative of an eyewitness.¹

Be that as it may, the record of the empty sepulchre stands firm. That is not, of course, a record of the resurrection. It merely records a fact so far unexplained. The evidence of the resurrection is found in the subsequent appearances of the risen Lord. But observe how perfectly the mysterious disappearance of the buried body, which St. Paul does not mention, squares with his conception of what had

¹ See note B.

taken place. He understands the resurrection to mean a great change in the mode of corporal existence. The unexplained disappearance of the dead body from the tomb, and its subsequent appearance under new and astonishing conditions, account precisely for the trend of his speculations; the buried body of humiliation, sown in dishonour, was changed into a body of glory, subject no longer to the conditions of flesh and blood.

For observe that none of the witnesses describe the risen Lord as returning to the ordinary conditions of human life. A pious imagination, left to itself, would probably have so conceived things: the resurrection of Christ would have been pictured as corresponding to the revival of Lazarus. There is nothing of this in the records. They vary; they seem in places to contain the memories of men struggling ineffectually to describe an elusive fact; but with whatever variations, they agree in presenting experiences new and inexplicable. One and the same brief narrative carries the phenomena from the extreme of spiritual to the extreme of material interpretation. The appearances and the disappearances of the risen Lord, the veiling and the recognition of his identity, are alike foreign to ordinary modes of experience. The opening words of the Acts of the Apostles, taken by themselves, would suggest a period of familiar intercourse with

the disciples, such as had been in the past ; they must be read in connection with what the same writer says in the last chapter of his former treatise, and there he brings out with many a suggestive touch the abnormal nature of the appearances.

The limited period of forty days, during which the Lord "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs," has been set in contrast with St. Paul's affirmation that he had seen the risen Christ, apparently after the same fashion as the other apostles. But you create the inconsistency by supposing the intercourse of the forty days to be normal, the life of the risen Lord during that period to be spent in the condition of flesh and blood, and the visible ascension which closed the period to be a translation to glory. The narrative, taken as a whole, does not suggest this. It says in effect only that the last recorded appearance took place forty days after the resurrection. And it is not improbable that St. Paul's strange words about the abortive birth refer in part to the particularity of the Lord's appearance to him long after such appearances to others had ceased. We might conjecture that the mention of the forty days and of the Ascension was intended to preclude all further appearances, if it were not for the writer's obvious dependence on St. Paul. He cannot have been ignorant of St. Paul's claim to have seen the

Lord as an apostle; he describes two such appearances, using on one occasion the same word that he employs for the appearances to the eleven.¹ He cannot mean that the Lord was seen no more after the forty days.

In sum, I put it to you that we have good historical evidence for these facts: that the dead body of Jesus was laid in the sepulchre; that on the morning of the third day the sepulchre was found open and empty, the dead body having inexplicably disappeared; that afterwards on various occasions many disciples saw the Lord, alive in the body, but living in a state of corporal existence altogether new and strange. That is the historic fact of the Resurrection. But I ask you to observe that, so far, we have nothing of any religious value, nothing to affect the lives and consciences of men. We have so far only an extraordinary event; and extraordinary events are continually occurring, nor do we allow them to affect our spiritual convictions. The religious value of the Resurrection lies, not in the mere event, but in the significance of the event. We may read in his own vehement words what it meant for St. Paul. He believed the fact, for which he had evidence; it was more important that he believed himself to be risen with Christ, and able to seek those things that

¹ Acts i. 3, *παρουσμενος*; ix. 17, *δοθεις*. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 5 *segg.*, *ωφθη*.

are above. It is possible to accept the fact without grasping its significance ; to believe in the event on the testimony of St. Paul, and there to rest. To enter upon his understanding of it is to pass from history to religion, from the historic fact to the object of faith.

VIII

THE RESURRECTION

II. THE OBJECT OF FAITH

“**T**HAT I may know him and the power of his resurrection.” Such was the aspiration of St. Paul when he was drawing near to the end of his course. For nearly thirty years he had been proclaiming the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; it was not of this fact that he desired fuller assurance. The fact was established, to his mind, by irrefragable evidence ; he desired a fuller apprehension of its meaning. Its meaning was to be sought partly in reference to the Person of the risen Lord, who was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.” St. Paul desired to know him ; and to know him in his new life, not merely as he was in his humiliation : “Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.” In the second place, the meaning of the resurrection was to be sought in the believer himself : “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection

from the dead." He would know the power of the resurrection. And this power would be recognized in the production of "the righteousness which is of God by faith"; he would walk in newness of life; for "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."

I bring together here words written by St. Paul on two occasions separated by a long interval. They show the continuity of his thought: what he aspired after at the beginning he was still desiring at the end—a perfect understanding of the mystery of the Resurrection, which he would probably attain only when he had himself passed through death. There is a knowledge, therefore, transcending the mere fact, and the method of this knowledge is the method of faith.

I speak of the method of faith. You know how variously faith is described in the books of the New Testament; indeed, in the writings of St. Paul himself. Variety there is, but behind all is one radical idea: Faith is a persuasion, an intense conviction that certain things are true. It is sometimes loosely described as if it were an additional sense, an immediate perception of truth as truth; and St. Paul is supposed to mean this when he says that faith is the gift of God. It is hard to find any ground for this big assumption, and it is not even remotely

suggested by the famous definition given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is probably a faithful summary of St. Paul's habitual teaching: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." This indicates an effect wrought by some unnamed cause on the human understanding. One kind of reasoning produces the complete certitude of the abstract sciences, another results in the demonstrations of history, another in the practical certainties of daily life; so also there is a method of reasoning which generates an intense conviction of spiritual truths. This intense conviction is Faith, which is therefore not a special faculty, but a special condition of mind. Faith and science are properly put in contradistinction: they are two distinct conditions of mind attained by two distinct methods. They are as distinct as either of them is from æsthetic taste. The convictions of taste are real; the method by which they are achieved is extremely subtle, though it does not altogether defy analysis; different persons vary very greatly in their capacity for using it. The convictions of science are real; the method by which they are reached is subtle; the acutest intellects of the world have for centuries been analysing it into elaborate systems of logic, and we think, at all events, that we understand its working fairly well. The convictions of faith are real; the method by

which they are attained is superlatively subtle ; it defies, and probably will always defy, the analysis which men like Pascal and Newman, and only such men, have attempted. The fact that we cannot analyse the method of faith does not make the method unsure or its results unreal. There was science before there was logic, and many scientific men do good work without knowing anything about their method. There was exquisite art before anyone studied the principles of æsthetics. There is faith, real and intense, in those who know nothing about the mental procedure by which it is approached.

What then is faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? It is an intense conviction of the spiritual truths which the fact of the resurrection signifies. If you ask me how we know that these truths are true, I can only answer that the conviction of their truth is reached by the method of faith. That is as complete a statement as if I were to say that the truths of the higher mathematics are shown to be true by the method of analytical geometry. You cannot demonstrate these truths to me if I am ignorant of elementary mathematics. Neither can I demonstrate spiritual truths to you if you have not the elements of faith. There is this difference between the two cases, that the spiritual truths apprehended by faith are few and simple, whereas the truths of mathematics are complicated in the

extreme; but spiritual truths, simple though they be, are a blank to minds that have not faith; if pressed on such minds they are rejected as nonsense, just as the language of the differential calculus seems to the ignorant vulgar mere gibberish. The preaching of the Cross was to the Greeks foolishness; to them that believed, it was the power of God and the wisdom of God. And so it is to this day.

But there is a complication. The spiritual truths on which our Christian faith lays hold are not truths of purely abstract divinity. They are not like the speculations of some Eastern religions and of some Western philosophies. They are essentially connected with an historic person. They are spiritual truths which are not so much revealed by Jesus Christ as wrapt up in his being, and revealed in him. Our faith is concerned with what he was and is, with what he did and is doing. In particular it is concerned with his death and resurrection. I have been speaking about the historical basis of faith, the facts historically demonstrated on which we work by faith, and from which we pass onward by faith. Faith and historical science, therefore, have not absolutely separate spheres. They have different methods, which ought to be kept clearly distinct; they have different ends which must not be confused. But they have a certain amount of common material. On the same material a man may work at one time by his-

torical science, at another time by faith ; and he can hardly be too careful to keep the two procedures distinct ; but if he thinks that he can shut them up in separate compartments of his mind, he is exaggerating the difference, and is preparing for himself disaster. His mistake is akin to that of thinking that faith and science are two separate faculties. They are operations not only of the same personality but of the same mind. They are distinct exercises of the same understanding, and cannot contradict each other without falsehood. A man cannot truthfully at once affirm by faith and deny by science the same thing in the same sense. But he may as freely affirm by faith a thing for which he can find no historical proof, as he may affirm by science a thing of which faith has no cognizance. He may even affirm by faith a thing which seems to be disproved by history. He can do this truthfully if the conviction which comes by faith is strong enough to overwhelm the contrary persuasion which rests on historical reasoning. He is really convinced one way or the other, and he should speak according to his conviction. But if he exercise himself in both methods about the same matter, there may very well be a superficial appearance of contradiction. Considering the Resurrection as a man of science, he may say with perfect candour that there is no evidence for it, or that the evidence points to the negative ; and at the same

time, as a man of faith, he may affirm the Resurrection with passionate conviction. I do not say that such a position is satisfactory. I should myself think it a very unpleasant position. I say only that it is a tenable position. Certitude of faith may coincide with the extreme of scientific scepticism.

But someone may ask how we can affirm by faith an historical or phenomenal fact. Faith has to do with spiritual realities, not with material phenomena ; it is concerned with the significance of the resurrection, not with the bare event. That contention is intelligible. If it were true, one of two consequences would follow. Faith in the resurrection would either be a possibility only for those who were scientifically acquainted with the event, or would be independent of the event and concerned with a purely abstract idea. Both conclusions are opposed to the facts of Christian experience. The phenomena of the resurrection have from the beginning been affirmed on evidence ; but they have also been affirmed by faith. Yet faith is not here departing from its proper contact with spiritual things. Faith does not directly affirm the phenomena : it affirms on spiritual grounds the sufficiency of the evidence. From this point of view the evidence is the abiding tradition of the Christian community, and there is by faith a conviction that this tradition cannot go seriously astray. It is the kind of conviction which St. Augustine

described in his well-known words to a Manichæan adversary: "I should not believe the Gospel, were I not moved thereto by the authority of the Catholic Church." The objective truth of the resurrection is received on trust, and to receive a thing on trust is part of the method of faith. It is obvious that most historic or other scientific truths are received on trust by the mass of men: few can verify them for themselves. The truth of the resurrection is received on the strength of a spiritual conviction that God will not allow the Church to go astray on such a matter. It is thus received by faith. In no other sense do we affirm in the Creed our belief in the Resurrection. A man might indeed affirm that article of the Creed purely on the ground of historical evidence; but that is not the ordinary sense of the Creed, for the Creed is not intended only for historical experts. If it be said that we accept it on "most certain warrants of Holy Scripture," there is only another step of the same kind interposed; for Holy Scripture, equally with the Creed, is received by an act of faith.

So the Resurrection, regarded as an assemblage of phenomena, is really, though indirectly, an object of faith. And the act of faith apprehending it is already a religious act, as the mere historical apprehension of it would not be. "If," says St. Paul, "thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt

believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." But why? Because there is already a movement towards righteousness: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame." That is to say, he who thus believes the fact is in the way to know the Lord himself and the power of his resurrection.

"Death is swallowed up in victory." That is how St. Paul asserts the power of the resurrection. The victory is won by and for man. "But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming." This victory over death is the spiritual significance of the resurrection. Death is hateful. There is abundant sophistry that tries to disguise the fact, but the truth of human nature cries aloud in answer. "I shall not die, but live," is the cry of hope that surges up even through despair. But death lies in wait. Think of the noble activities of human life; its joys, its sorrows moulding character, its patient labours for an end distant but still in view; the slow ripening of wisdom, the accumulation of experience; and then—

Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life.

Think of the wasted energy. Think of an Acton, storing his memory with vast reading—all to perish

utterly, as when a rich treasure-ship founders at sea. Think, with yet greater pity, of one who has made no name by which he may be remembered—the common lot; who has toiled through life without honour or reward, striving only to fit himself for his place in the world—and the end, to lie down and be forgotten, his place knowing him no more. The song of Hezekiah throbs with this pain.

I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of the grave :

I am deprived of the residue of my years.

I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living :

I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is removed, and is carried away from me as a shepherd's tent :

I have rolled up like a weaver my life : he will cut me off from the loom :

From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

Then comes the relief, the promise of a brief spell of years yet to be allowed.

I shall go as in solemn procession all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.

O Lord, by these things men live :

And wholly therein is the life of my spirit :

Wherefore recover thou me, and make me to live.

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For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee :

They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day ;

The father to the children shall make known thy truth.

All this rejoicing over a short reprieve ; and then once more the inevitable, the abhorred shears ! Is not human life a tragedy ? Is it any wonder that some, breaking down under the strain, try to turn it to comedy : " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die " ?

I have said that sophistries abound by which the hatefulness of death is disguised. It is perfectly true that in some circumstances death is to be chosen rather than life, and we hold a death, so chosen, in the highest honour. But why ? Not because death itself is ever a desirable thing, but just because of its hatefulness, which makes the act of choosing it heroic. We honour a man, not because he embraces death, but because he gives up for a good cause his life, his most treasured possession. Others will choose death, or at least welcome it, not from heroism, but from cowardice or weariness. Is death therefore desirable ? Take the most favourable case : a man worn out with honourable service is glad to lie down and be at rest. But why ? It is because his powers are decaying ; and that decay itself is creeping death. It is only because he is dying that he will be glad to have done with it. To say that a swift death is better than a lingering death is not to prove that death is good. The most powerful plea for death that ever was written is found in Swift's appalling description of the people discovered

by Gulliver in his travels, who could not die. But what is the peculiar horror of their fate? It is that they are doomed to see all their friends die, and to be left in loneliness without end. It is the prevalence of death that makes this imagined immortality an intolerable horror.

Because death is the common lot, it would be no advantage to be specially exempt. Because it is inevitable we accustom ourselves to it, and make the best of it. But we do not deceive ourselves, and the truth will out. Death is the spoiling of the world. The connection of sin and death is no piece of theological jugglery. They are the two wreckages of human life, the ruin of God's work. And resurrection is the building up of what was ruined. You cannot know the power of the Resurrection, unless you realize the hatefulness of death.

The Resurrection is apprehended by faith as victory over death. It does not merely show that death has no power to destroy man utterly. It does not signify only the immortality of the soul. That is no conquest of death. The immortal soul is not the living man, and whatever activities are possible in the disembodied state are not activities of the whole man. Jesus Christ has risen from the dead in the fulness of his humanity. That we may have no doubt on that score, his body, torn and bruised in the humiliation of the cross, was transmuted into a body of glory. The

faith of the resurrection extends to this fact, and the hope of the resurrection extends to the redemption of our bodies; they shall be fashioned anew and made conformable to his glorious body. Would you see why this should be an object of spiritual faith? Then consider to what men have been led by a false spirituality, teaching contempt for the body. If, on the one hand, it has induced an extravagant austerity, a mockery of Christian asceticism, an attempt to trample on the body as a mere encumbrance of the soul, it has, on the other hand, opened a way to utter licentiousness, the abandonment of the body, as an accursed worthless thing, to its own lusts: the doctrine has been expressly taught that no material degradation of the body, however swinish, can defile the pure immortal spirit. In either case, the one hope of redemption is to escape from the body, leaving it to perish in its own corruption. The faith of the resurrection will save you from that. Perhaps you do not need salvation from anything so extreme. But you do need an assurance that you are capable of holiness in your whole nature, soul and body. You find that assurance when you know Jesus Christ himself, as he now is, and the power of his resurrection. You are conscious of him reigning, whole and perfect man, triumphant over all the weaknesses of our common nature; triumphant over the last weakness of death; triumphant also over all the petty

weaknesses that you know so well. You find here the correction of sloth and slackness. You know that your labour is not in vain, that you are storing up fruit—not to be dispersed into nothingness just as it comes to its ripest, but for unending use. You know that bodily discipline is not a waste of energy, a weary attempt to train an organ that will perish in the using, but a storage of energy that will go to your fashioning anew after the image of the risen Christ. There is no part of your life that is out of relation to your faith.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” By faith you apprehend the Resurrection as a victory over sin, as well as over death. We see Jesus, the Son of Man, raised to a new condition of life, a condition in which sin has no place. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; he came into contact with sin; he was tempted as we are. But he passed away from this. “The death that he died, he died unto sin once; but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” And you take this new life, not only as a guarantee that you shall one day overcome death, but also as a present assurance of a power to overcome sin. You are already associated with this risen Lord. You have a mystical association with him, which you are to make also a real association. You have been buried with him through baptism unto death, that like as he was raised from the dead

through the glory of the Father, so you also may walk in newness of life. You are to reckon yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. No part of your life is out of relation to your faith. You are to be sanctified, body and soul, by association with the living Lord. Therefore, says St. Paul, let not sin reign in your mortal bodies. They are mortal, they must die ; but they shall live again, and already they anticipate the power of an endless life.

Thus the Resurrection, as apprehended by faith, has an ethical value. Without this it would have no bearing on religion : it would be merely a stupendous event. Even if it were regarded as an earnest of our future immortality, that alone would not give it a religious value ; for immortality has no necessary connection with religion. Faith is not credulity, an appetite for marvels. It lays hold on no unrelated marvel ; it lays hold on spiritual realities, relations of man, a spiritual being, to God the Father of spirits. Those relations are essentially moral relations ; for God is holy, and holiness is that without which no man shall see God. The Resurrection is a proper object of faith because it is the acknowledgment of such relations in the person of Jesus Christ, and the earnest of their continuance in ourselves. Even the phenomenal fact is a proper object of faith as the necessary preamble to all that it signifies. It is an

historic fact ; I can prove it by historical evidence. Well and good ; I welcome the proof. It is more important that I receive the fact as an integral part of that body of doctrine which with the heart I believe unto righteousness.

IX

THE ASCENSION

WE may regard the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we will, in a purely moral aspect. Doing so, we may find a perfect expression of our thought in the collect for the festival; we pray that as he ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend and with him continually dwell. There are some perhaps who will wish to stop here, refusing to add a single detail of thought. We may, again, regard the Ascension in a purely theological aspect, considering it and placing it as an act in the great work of redemption. We may think of it as the triumph of the Son of Man, the elevation of our human nature in him to the throne of Godhead; or we may turn our thoughts to the mystery of priesthood and see here the culmination of atonement, the reception of the cleansed and perfected creature into the intimate life of the Creator. Here too the mind may rest satisfied, feeding on its own thoughts. Yet even to those who

are content with these conceptions there must come at times, one would suppose, the question whether they rest on a sure basis of fact. Is it a fact that Jesus of Nazareth ascended into heaven? If we assert this as fact, what do we mean by our statement? And how is the fact related to these moral and theological corollaries?

It is possible to put away these questions. I have known a man express great admiration for the Ascension-day collect, and even say it with fervour, who regarded the record of the ascension as mythical. The doctrine of sacrifice and redemption, or of the exaltation of man, might interest one who believes the body of Jesus to have mouldered into unregarded dust. Comtism is possible, for it exists; and this would not be harder. But will such an attitude satisfy you? Refinements of spiritual fancy are, after all, fanciful. Is the Christian religion nothing more? Or is it essentially a system resting on facts? So it seemed to Mr. Myers. He apparently considered Christianity neither more true nor less true than any other product of Eastern thought; but it differs from them, he says in the Epilogue to his *Human Personality*, in that it rests on a basis of observed facts. This witness is true; or at least that is how we regard Christianity. Christianity is not a simple record of facts, nor is Christian faith identical with historic certainty; but faith does lay hold

of truths which are revealed in part through facts, observed and recorded.

What, then, is the record? We may note first the brief statement in the appendix to St. Mark's Gospel :—

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

This will not carry us far. It is too vague ; it is not a narrative or a description of an event, but a sort of summary of results. It represents, not the basis of fact, but the superstructure of faith.

Turn now to the record which goes by the name of St. Luke. We must read the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles as a continuous work. The writer artistically ends the first book with a brief statement which he expands on the opening page of the second book. If we compare the conclusion of the Acts we shall have little doubt that he intended to write—perhaps did actually write—a third book, which would open with a detailed account of St. Paul's two years in Rome. So we understand his method. Here then is the brief statement in the Gospel :—

He led them out until they were over against Bethany : and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

If you will look in the margin of the Revised Version you will see that some ancient authorities omit these concluding words, "and was carried up into heaven." The best critics incline to the opinion that they were not in the earliest copies of the book. In that case the Gospel, as it left the hand of its author, ended, like the first and fourth Gospels, without any statement about the ascension. Of the original conclusion of St. Mark we know nothing. It is possible that a sort of convention forbade the introduction of this theme into a narrative of the doings and teachings of Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the culminating point. Allusions to the ascension are not lacking in the fourth Gospel; yet the evangelist ends his narrative, whether we look at the conclusion of the twentieth chapter or at that of the twenty-first, without saying what ultimately became of the risen Lord. There is, so far, nothing to show whether his appearances came to a definite close, or whether, after the last recorded, the disciples were left still in expectation of further intercourse. Yet no one doubts that when these last chapters were written the fact of the ascension was generally accepted, and it is freely alluded to in the Gospel. There must have been some reason for withholding a narrative of the event. It is, therefore, the less surprising that we find no mention of it, or a doubtful mention, in the other Gospels.

But in the opening chapter of his second book St. Luke describes the ascension in some detail. He dates it roughly at about forty days after the resurrection; we are not bound to insist on the exact number. He gives the scene: it occurred on the mount called Olivet. If we are to read the concluding words of the Gospel as referring to the same occasion, it was where the road to Bethany crossed the ridge, just out of sight from Jerusalem. He gives the substance of a discourse immediately preceding, and with dramatic completeness the event follows immediately on the question of the disciples, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" and the answer, "It is not for you to know times or seasons." Then—

When he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

There are three things to notice in this brief statement. In the first place, a definite manner of disappearance is described. Many appearances of the Lord after the resurrection are recorded, and it is obvious that they were passing appearances, but the manner of his coming and going is never described, save in the scene at Emmaus, where we are told that he "became invisible," and in this account of the ascension. In the next place, reading together the doubtful words from the Gospel and the certainly

authentic words from the Acts, we find the manner of his going on this occasion described quite definitely as a lifting-up from the earth, and that not sudden, for the beholders kept their eyes fixed on him as he went. Thirdly, a cloud received him, as at the Transfiguration. The writer certainly marked these points with care, for he adds the precise statement of the two men in white apparel—

This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

In this narrative we have either a pure invention, or a pious belief of the first Christian generation crystallized in words, or an observed fact. Which is it? I think we may dismiss the hypothesis of invention. That similar stories were invented seems to be sufficiently proved by the apocryphal Gospels which survive, probably out of many that were written. But the steady rejection of those Gospels shows that the first Christian age was not uncritical, and did not lack either the will or the power to discriminate against fictitious narratives. Moreover there are abundant reasons for believing that the writer whom we know as St. Luke was the candid and careful historian which in the preface of his Gospel he claimed to be. I cannot go more fully into this; I can only say confidently that he at least meant this narrative of the ascension to be

true to fact. Nor has he taken it over bodily from some unknown source; the style and the wording are emphatically his own. But did he crystallize a vague tradition current among the faithful, or did he investigate and ascertain the actual facts? There is nothing in the nature of things against the former supposition. However highly we may think of his character as historian, we should be doing violence to all sound principles of criticism if we supposed the details of the opening chapters of the Acts to have the same kind of historical value as the details recorded of the shipwreck at Malta. There is probably much in these chapters which is exactly what I have called a crystallization of tradition. We do not suppose the discourses to have been reported by a shorthand writer. The incidents of the day of Pentecost are recorded rather by way of impression and result than after the fashion of a detailed narrative. Is it so with the record of the ascension?

I think not. If you read those crystallized traditions carefully you will be struck by the summariness of the narrative. Indications of time and place are, as a rule, vague, unless they are brought in as essential features of the story, as when Peter repudiated the charge of drunkenness on the ground that it was only the third hour of the day. You do not observe those little unconscious

touches which betray the evidence of an eyewitness. I am inclined to except the story of the lame man healed at the gate of the Temple, which seems to me full of such touches, as if the writer had heard the scene graphically described by one who was present—one is disposed to say, by the man himself. I think these signs of the eyewitness are visible also in the record of the ascension. The brevity of the account makes nothing against this; an eyewitness is not bound to be long-winded; indeed, if he is quite honest, he will tell what he saw in the fewest words, and no more. Compare the account at the end of St. Mark's Gospel. There you have the characteristic expression of a crystallized tradition; summary, and looking rather to the result than to the action. St. Luke's account does not look to the result. That is added in the comment of the two men in white apparel. The ascension itself is described exactly as it would appear to an eyewitness; the vision is arrested by the cloud which receives the ascended Lord; there is no upward leap of the imagination to the heavenly scene. I think we have an observed fact, recorded by a careful writer from the description of an eyewitness.

But suppose it otherwise. Suppose that we have here the work of an artist in words who crystallizes with dramatic accuracy a tradition which came to

him only as common talk. Are we then removed from the region of observed fact? By no means. For the ascension is not an isolated fact. It follows in proper sequence upon others. We must here assume the great events of the Gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and his appearances to his disciples after he was risen. These appearances came to a close. When and how? What was become of the risen Master, who had been seen by Mary Magdalen, by the Eleven, by James, by above five hundred brethren at once? The appearances were verified by witnesses; they had ceased. Here were observed facts, even if there were only a vague tradition about the manner of the last appearance. The Lord being thus gone, the faithful were commonly convinced that he was now living in heaven. The narrative of St. Luke might be nothing else but a crystallization of this tradition, and yet would have its value as a record of fact.

This becomes the clearer when we consider the significance of the ascension; the significance alike of the general tradition and of the particular details recorded. We will consider this significance under three heads, physical, moral, and theological.

Physically, what does the ascension mean? Observe that it cannot mean the same for us that it meant for the faithful of the first age. Our cosmography, our conception of the physical universe

and its constitution, is so different from theirs that we cannot relate phenomena in the same way. I suppose that what we know as the Ptolemaic cosmography was more or less consciously accepted by all, at least so far as this, that the heavens were conceived as vast spheres enclosing one another and enclosing the earth at their centre, from which an upward movement through all the spheres would be constant to highest heaven. From this conception we derive our words of Ascension and Descent, just as from a conception more primitive we retain the language that speaks of the rising and setting sun. It is sometimes loosely supposed that this conception of the universe made the ascension intelligible, and apparently rational, as it cannot be for us. A belief in this, and much else, is therefore supposed to be lost with the loss of the old cosmography. But was the old conception of the event so easy, so intelligible and rational? Let us put ourselves in the place of a believer of the first age; let us try to realize the physical significance of the ascension for him. He imagines a human body, having gravity and normal dimensions, rising from the earth in upward flight to an immense distance, through sphere after sphere, to the height of heights. But where is this limit? If he impose an artificial measure, is there no height beyond? If he give this contradiction the go-by, he has to suppose the human body, having gravity

and normal dimensions, located in one spot on the surface of an enormous sphere. Is this a simple, intelligible, rational, mental image? No, indeed. Men could hold it only by tacitly suppressing its difficulties. Dante mapped out the Ptolemaic cosmos with minute accuracy, but he could bring it within the compass of practical imagination only by ignoring the measures of distance.

When we pass to our own conception of the universe, these difficulties disappear precisely because we have not a clear-cut mental image into which the observed facts have to be fitted. We no longer think of heaven as having a definite physical relation to the earth—a relation of distance and direction. We retain the old terms, just as we speak of the sunrise, but with a new physical significance. We no longer think of the ascension as an upward flight of ponderable matter. Such a movement would have no meaning except in immediate relation to this small planet on which we live; it would have no cosmic significance at all. There is language nearer to our thought in the words of the fourth Gospel about the time when the Lord "should depart out of this world unto the Father," but we must not read into those words our own physical understanding.

Can we place the ascension physically in the order of things that we know? To do this we must start from the resurrection. We see the body of Jesus

issuing from the sepulchre, with identity complete and yet physically changed, existing under new conditions, of which we have only the most imperfect apprehension. The evidence is sufficient for the fact, but wholly insufficient for any scientific explanation of the fact. Living under these new conditions the Body is seen for a time partaking in a measure of the common life of men spent under ordinary conditions—speaking, walking, eating, and drinking. After a short time the same living Body appears to have passed into yet another state of existence, having no longer any direct physical relations with our ordinary experience. The Lord is said to have passed out of this world, to have ascended into heaven. These words can have no physical significance for us except as indicating a complete change of conditions, a change into a mode of existence whither we cannot follow by the exercise of our sensitive intelligence, and which, in our lack of material for comparison, we cannot even imaginatively picture. We speak of the change in the language suggested by an older conception, because we can find no words that shall place us in closer touch with reality, and because the older words are consecrated by a thousand associations.

I think you will see on consideration that the graphic touches of description given by the author of the Acts do not belong to the essence of the observed

fact. I believe them to be accurate. I believe that the disciples saw what he describes them as seeing ; but I understand the parting of the Lord to have been so visibly ordered merely for the purpose of impressing the fact upon their understandings. The uplifting from the earth, the reception into the cloud, were for the presentment of the fact to their eyes ; the essential fact itself was that departure of the Lord out of earthly conditions of life to which the Church of the first age bore witness, apart from all such details of presentment.

Another consideration comes in here. Long after the Forty Days the Lord was seen by St. Paul, and that appearance is described by the Apostle in exactly the same terms as those to which James and Peter and the five hundred brethren testified. It seems quite certain that St. Paul understood it to be of the same kind, presented under the same conditions. But from this it will follow, if we read together the evidence of St. Paul and the narrative of the Acts, that the ascension at the end of the forty days did not effect a real change in the condition of the risen Lord. We must exclude the idea that he subsisted in a certain condition for some days after the resurrection, and was then translated into a further condition of glory. We shall not be able to distinguish the Ascension in point of time from the Resurrection. This will remove difficulties which

have been found in passages which speak of the two events in terms almost of simultaneity. It will also extinguish some questions, always puzzling and not always reverent, about the conditions of his bodily existence during the intervening time. We shall understand the forty days to be a period not of the Lord's existence, but of the Apostles' experience. The ascension as observed by them will not be a change for him, but a demonstration to them. The date will not be that of his reception into heaven, but of their recognition of the fact.

I have spent much time over the physical significance of the Ascension—by far the least important part of my subject—because I would not seem to be shirking any difficulties. I pass on to speak briefly of its moral significance. It is expressed in the collect for the festival. We pray that as we believe our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into heaven so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell. I think that we should the more easily grasp this moral significance after our rectification of the physical significance. The notion of a measurable ascent to a measurable heaven seems hampering in this connection. If rigidly followed, it involves the further notion that presence in heaven is absence by a measurable distance from earth, and that presence on earth is absence from heaven. Has not this notion left abundant traces in controversy? And

is there not peril of unreality when men holding to this notion speak of the ascent of heart and mind? Are they not likely to fall back into a mere languorous aspiration after the impossible? It was always much more than this to the saints. But when St. Paul declared that our citizenship is in heaven, when the writer to the Hebrews proclaimed in ringing words, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," was there not needed an effort to shake off the incumbent sense of a vast distance to be traversed, or rather to be annihilated? The religious sentiment could overpower the obstacles of sense; but there were obstacles to be overpowered.

Is it so with us? I think not. Our faith is less robust than that of the old saints; but it has fewer difficulties to overcome. Heaven is nearer to us in this sense, that it does not seem to be withdrawn from us through long tracts of being. When we think of our blessed Lord passing finally out of the conditions of this mortal life, departing out of this world unto the Father, we have not to think of him as physically remote; all measures of distance, great or small, are foreign to our thought; we are freed from the hampering consciousness of them in the background. We have the less difficulty in reading together the Lord's assurance that his departure is for our good, and his promise, "Lo!

I am with you always." The ascent of heart and mind means for us all that it meant essentially for the old saints, and it is for us an uncomplicated moral idea.

The Lord has passed away from the conditions of this mortal life. He was under those conditions ; he submitted to the uttermost. He passed from under them by death. He rose from the dead, and showed himself in those conditions, but not holden by them. Then, when he had sufficiently revealed this fact, he passed away from them altogether ; and that, not leaving behind as a useless encumbrance the Body which he took of Mary, but carrying it with him, whole Man, into the immensity of the life of God. This is the earnest of our redemption ; not merely of a remote redemption to be completed far hence in time and space, but of redemption, now begun, from present conditions of mortality. In heart and mind following him you are freed from the law of death ; freed from the obsession of sin ; freed from the fetters of habit ; free to enter upon your purchased inheritance. In a word, you have the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And there is a theological significance of the Ascension. I think it is little affected by the enlargement of the physical significance, and therefore I shall say the less about it. St. Paul glances in many places at this theological significance, but we

find it most fully worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The ascended Lord is said to make intercession or atonement for us, and the writer to the Hebrews develops this theme on the type of the annual atonement made by the high-priest under the Mosaic dispensation. Upon that annual atonement the whole ceremonial system of sacrifice depended. It was a yearly sanctification of the holy place, of the holy nation, and of the holy priesthood. To the mysterious entrance of the high-priest into the holy of holies on that yearly occasion the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven is exactly compared. There are two significant differences. He entered in, not with the blood of slain beasts, but with his own blood. He entered in, not repeatedly year by year, but once for all, and that because the atonement was complete and needed no repetition. "Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

There are few things harder than to grasp the essential idea of sacrifice. It is entangled with many associations, with some fantastic, with some terrible imaginings. It pervades the history of religion, now

rising to the highest spiritual conceptions, now sinking into abominable superstitions. We ponder over the ceremonial law of the Old Testament, wondering how much of it is divinely inspired, how much represents human cravings after the unknown, which the patient love of God made use of in the education of his people. Of two things we are sure: that everything essential to sacrifice was done by Jesus Christ, and that at the heart of the essential idea of sacrifice lies the purpose, as St. Augustine said, of inhering in God. We may add this, that in sacrifice there must be, not absolutely, but in relation to fallen man, the element of death accepted and endured—the surrender of life. Our blessed Lord departed out of this world, by way of death, unto the Father, laying down his life that he might take it again; and so in respect of that human life, breaking away from the surrounding conditions of sin and death, he inheres eternally in God. So his sacrifice is complete. And since he is the Son of Man—the typical man, the head and front of humanity—he endured death and entered into his glory, not for himself alone, but for every man, making intercession, atonement, for the whole race. His own sacrifice, the high-priestly sacrifice of atonement, is offered once for all, not to be repeated; but it does not preclude other sacrifices. Rather, according to the type of Aaron, it is this which makes other sacrifices possible. He offers for himself; he offers

also for the sanctification of the holy place, of the holy people, of the holy priesthood. It is because he has entered into the Holy of Holies, making atonement for us, that we are able in the holy place without, in the court of the Lord's house, to offer our daily sacrifices. We offer them—every holy work, says St. Augustine, by which we seek to inhere in God. But chiefly we offer the appointed sacrifice which is peculiarly associated with his, which becomes indeed one with his, the sacrifice of the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ.

The Lord has departed out of this world unto the Father. He has passed into that mode of existence, impenetrable to our senses, which we call Heaven. He is within the veil. We stand without, yet very near, worshipping in the right which his entrance has obtained for us. With heart and mind we strive to enter, faith being to us the evidence of things not seen, and hope as the anchor of the soul grappling to the things beyond the veil.

NOTE A

On Romans x. 6-9

(See p. 46)

BOTH here and in the Septuagint (Deut. xxx. 14), from which St. Paul does not actually quote, the word is ῥῆμα, which according to Philo is μέρος τοῦ λόγου. *Legis Alleg.*, lib. ii. p. 93 (*Ed.* 1691); οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι τῷ ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ, τουτέστι καὶ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ λόγου τραφήσεται, καὶ διὰ μέρους αὐτοῦ. τὸ μὲν γὰρ στόμα σύμβολον τοῦ λόγου· τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα μέρος αὐτοῦ. In this connection, indeed, ῥῆμα seems to be identical with λόγος προφορικός. I do not think that my argument is affected by the contention of Sanday and Headlam that St. Paul is merely using scriptural language for rhetorical effect, not quoting and interpreting. The point is that as ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη is personified, so is τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως, and the latter is personally identified with the Christ. This is far from being expressly the full Christian doctrine of the Λόγος, but it betrays the idea of that doctrine present to St. Paul's mind, and sufficiently familiar to his readers for such allusive employment.

NOTE B

On John xx. 4-8

(See pp. 76 and 110)

In this note the four canonical Gospels are distinguished by Roman numerals.

Ἔτρεχον δὲ οἱ δύο ὁμοῦ· καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς προέδραμε τάχιον τοῦ Πέτρου, καὶ ἦλθε πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, οὐ μέντοι εἰσῆλθεν. ἔρχεται οὖν καὶ Σίμων Πέτρος ἀκολουθῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον· καὶ θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα, καὶ τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων κείμενον, ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον. τότε οὖν εἰσῆλθε καὶ ὁ ἄλλος μαθητὴς ὁ ἐλθὼν πρῶτος εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ εἶδε, καὶ ἐπίστευσεν.

I have twice referred to this passage as bearing the marks of an eyewitness in its difficulties. A scene vividly present to the memory is described in words which are inadequate and obscure because the narrator does not feel the need of clearly arranging his ideas. The most puzzling phrases are *βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια* and *ἀλλὰ χωρὶς ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον*. The former is simple enough until one asks what it means; then it is realized that *κείμενα* is intended

to be a descriptive word, emphasized by the use of *θεωρεῖ*, but the description is diversely interpreted. A common explanation is that the grave-clothes were lying on the ground as they had fallen from the Lord's body, risen and standing upright. Mr. Beard, in his *Parable of the Grave-clothes*, put forward a suggestion which has been much followed, that the body having, as it were, exhaled from the clothes left them lying flat and undisturbed, a proof of some mysterious change.¹ Renan, on the contrary, sees here a description of the linen clothes lying "*épars dans le caveau*," as left by the spoilers who had hurriedly removed the body. It is evident that these three interpretations are not derived from the word *κείμενα* itself, but from pre-conceived ideas of what had happened. The descriptive word fails to describe. The other descriptive phrase about the *sudarium* is in worse case still, for it is grammatically obscure as well as lending itself to diverse explanations of the scene.

I do not propose to unravel the difficulties; my case is that they are inextricable. But I think it may be well to compare the passage with what is said in the other Gospels, that we may see whether it is likely to have been built upon a common tradition.

It is necessary first to compare the brief statement in III. 24¹² :—

Ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἀναστὰς ἔδραμεν ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει τὰ ὀθόνια [κείμενα] μόνα.

This bears evident marks of an interpolation drawn, with some inaccuracy, from IV. 20⁶⁻⁷, words which properly

¹ Adopted and developed by Mr. Latham in *The Risen Master*.

belong to the "other disciple" being transferred to Peter. The verse is wanting in D. and other codd. on which Blass founded his "Roman Text," and he omits it without question from his reconstruction of that text. Its persistence in other manuscripts, with a significant uncertainty about the words *κείμενα μόνα*, indicates an early absorption of the interpolation; but that it is an interpolation may be inferred from the sudden introduction of the word *ὀθόνια*, not used in the description of the interment, III. 23^{ss}. The word *μόνα* seems to be a compendious evasion of the difficulty contained in *οὐ μετὰ τῶν ὀθονίων*, κ.τ.λ. The puzzling word *κείμενα* was perhaps not taken over in the first instance. The conclusion is that the passage IV. 20⁴⁸ stands alone, or is foreshadowed only in III. 24⁴.

It must, however, be compared with the fourfold account of the interment.

- I. 27^{ss}. Καὶ λαβὼν τὸ σῶμα ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ σινδόνι καθαρῇ, καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ καινῇ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ.
- II. 15⁴⁸. Καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδόνα, καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησε τῇ σινδόνι, καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ. . . .
16⁴⁹. Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμῃ ἡγόρασαν ἀρώματα, ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν.
- III. 23^{ss-30}. Καὶ καθελὼν ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ σινδόνι, καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνήματι λαξευτῷ, οὃ οὐκ ἦν οὐδεὶς οὐκὼ κείμενος. . . . ὑποστρέψασαι δὲ ἡτοίμασαν ἀρώματα καὶ μύρα.

IV. 19³⁶⁻⁴². ἦλθεν οὖν καὶ ἤρε τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ. ἦλθε δὲ καὶ Νικόδημος, ὁ ἐλθὼν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς τὸ πρῶτον, φέρων μίγμα σμύρνης καὶ ἀλόης ὡς λίτρας ἑκατόν. ἔλαβον οὖν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις μετὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων, καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν. ἦν δὲ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ὅπου ἐσταυρώθη κήπος, καὶ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ μνημεῖον καινόν, ἐν ᾧ οὐδέπω οὐδεὶς ἐτέθη. ἐκεῖ οὖν διὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ μνημεῖον, ἔθηκαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

The Synoptics are in close agreement, except that II. and III. alone mention the purchase of spices by the women, and I. and III. substitute ἐνετύλιξε for the equivalent ἐνείληγε.¹ This word has its interest in view of ἐντετυλιγμένον, IV. 20⁷. If it were in common use for the shrouding of a corpse, of which I believe there is no evidence, its introduction would be self-explained. If not, the concurrence of I. and III. upon it may point to a source.

The description of IV. differs considerably from the others, both in word and in detail. The diverse accounts of the spices are not necessarily inconsistent, for we are not bound to suppose that the women knew all that had been done, or that a further embalming was impossible. The details of IV., and especially καθὼς ἔθος ἐστὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἐνταφιάζειν, seem to indicate a completed burial, and not a hurried deposition; but, on the other hand, there is a hint of this in the remark that a grave near at hand was chosen. The description ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις is in contrast with ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ σινδόνι. Dr. Swete, in his Commentary on St. Mark, reads the descriptions together, saying that the body was first swathed in a linen

¹ So also *Evang. Nicodem.*, c. 11.

shroud and then tied with bandages; he compares the account of Lazarus, IV. 11⁴, interpreting *ὀθονίοις* = *χειρίαις*. This sort of conflate interpretation is akin to a conflate reading. It would be legitimate on the assumption that both accounts alike were historical and completely understood. It will not do as a means of supporting their historicity, or as an explanation of one of them. Mr. Beard, on the other hand, ignored the Synoptics, and interpreted *ἔδησαν αὐτὸ ὀθονίοις* to mean that the body was wound about with bandages from the shoulders to the feet. But the assumption that *ὀθόνια* are *bandages* is unnecessary. The word has that meaning in medical writers, but in Polybius, V. 89, 2 (*ἐπηγγείλατο . . . ὀθονίων ἰστούς τριωχιλίους*) it stands for the sails of a ship. It could certainly, then, be used for a shroud; and *ἔδησαν ὀθονίοις* will in that case add to *ἐνετύλιξε σινδόνι* only the fact that the shroud was tied.

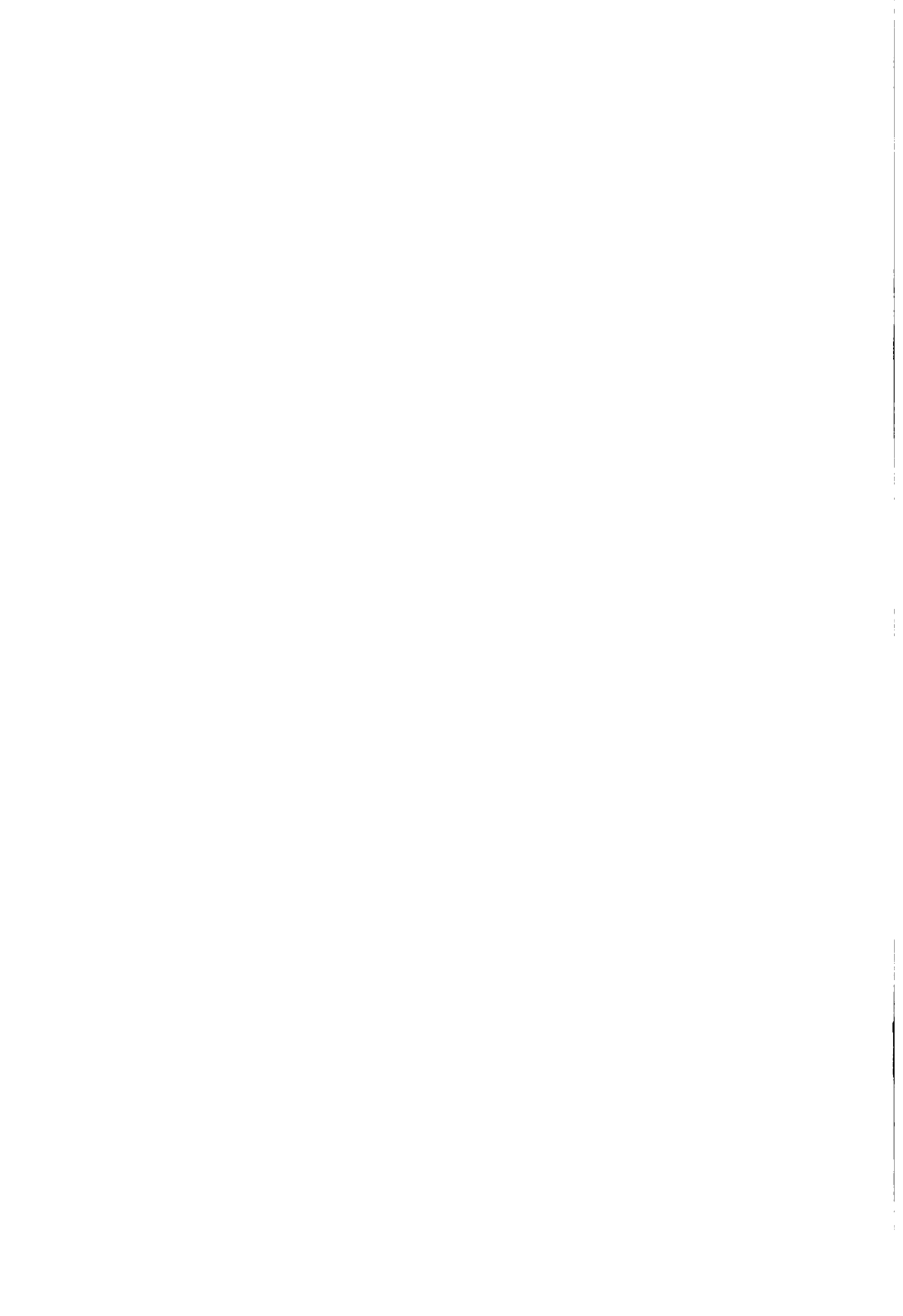
The matter is, for me, partly complicated, partly simplified, by the existence of the Holy Shroud of Turin. I am convinced, in spite of the great archæological difficulties involved, that M. Paul Vignon has demonstrated in his *Linceul du Christ* the authenticity of the shroud, the imprint of the Lord's body having been projected upon the cloth by the process which he has experimentally verified. If this be so, we know how the body was shrouded. It was laid upon a piece of linen about four yards long, which was then doubled over the head and brought down to the feet, and so, perhaps, lightly tied. This was the *σινδών* of the Synoptics, the *ὀθόνια*, as I take it, of IV., the plural being possibly due to the doubling of the cloth. We know also that *μίγμα*, and not *ἐλιγμα*, is the true reading in IV. 19³⁹; a liquid preparation of aloes

smeared on the cloth, according to M. Vignon's verified hypothesis, having rendered it sensitive to the ammoniacal exhalations from the body.

The mention of the *sudarium*, however, becomes more difficult. Τὸ σουδάριον, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, has naturally been taken to mean a face-cloth. But the use of such a veil would prevent the projection of the features upon the shroud as now seen. M. Vignon takes the *ὀθόνια* to be bandages—a natural assumption in the medical school to which he belongs—and is much puzzled by them; he interprets the σουδάριον of the shroud doubled back over the head, ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς. The rendering is perhaps not impossible: the corresponding passage in IV. 11⁴, ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ σουδαρίῳ περιεδέδετο, does not help, for it is patient of either meaning, and of yet a third. But was a winding-sheet ever called *sudarium*? I do not know by what history the French word *suaire* came to its present use. The third interpretation is attractive. The word περιεδέδετο suggests a napkin tied over the head and under the chin to keep the features in order. After careful examination of M. Vignon's photographs, I have come to the conclusion that such an arrangement would account for some of the missing details in the figure imprinted on the Holy Shroud. Mr. Beard, on wholly different grounds, understood the *sudarium* in this sense, taking the words ἐντετυλιγμένον εἰς ἓνα τόπον to mean that it was found lying twisted into a loop, as worn. I do not think that ἐντετυλιγμένον will bear this meaning. The passive seems to be always used of something wrapped up in an envelope, and not of the envelope itself. So it is in Aristoph., *Νυθ.*, 955, and Athen. p. 106, where ἐντετυλιγμένον is equivalent to περιειλημμένον. Mr. Beard's account of the separation of

the *συνδράμιον* from the *ὁθόνη* is most ingenious, but it falls with his treatment of the *ὁθόνη*. I do not pretend to know why there was this separation, why it was so minutely observed, or what it signified. My contention is that only an eyewitness would have given a description so evidently satisfactory to himself, so unmeaning to his readers.

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